First Session—1-18.

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BENGAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

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PRESIDENT.

(Vacant.)

DEPUTY PRESIDENT.

Khan Bahadur ABDUL HAMID CHOWDHURY.

PANEL OF CHAIRMEN.

1. Mr. KAMINI KUMAR DUTTA.
2. Raja BHUPENDRA NARAYAN SINHA Bahadur, of Nashipur.
3. Mr. J. B. ROSS.
4. Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN.

SECRETARY TO THE COUNCIL.

Dr. S. K. D. GUPTA, M.A. (CANTAB.), LL.M. (CANTAB.), LL.D. (DUBLIN.), Barrister-at-Law.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY TO THE COUNCIL.

Mr. S. A. E. HUSSAIN, B.L., Advocate.

REGISTRAR TO THE COUNCIL DEPARTMENT.

Mr. T. M. PAUL, B.A.

GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL.

GOVERNOR OF BENGAL.

His Excellency Sir JOHN ARTHUR HERBERT, G.C.I.E.

MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS.

The Hon'ble Mr. ABUL KASEM FAZLUL HUQ, Minister in charge of the Home, Publicity and Finance Departments.

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca, Minister in charge of the Departments of Industries, Commerce and Labour.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU, Minister in charge of the Departments of Public Health, Local Self-Government and Civil Defence.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM, Minister in charge of the Education Department.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE, Minister in charge of the Revenue Department and of the Judicial and Legislative Departments.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN, Minister in charge of the Agriculture Department and of the Co-operative Credit and Rural Indebtedness Departments.

The Hon'ble Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED, Minister in charge of the Department of Communications and Works.

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BURMAN, Minister in charge of the Forests and Excise Department.

BENGAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS.

A

1. Ahmad, Khan Bahadur Naziruddin. [Burdwan Division Muhammadan (Rural).]
2. Ahmed, Mr. Nur. [Chittagong Muhammadan (Rural).]
3. Ahmed, Mr. Mesbahuddin. [Bengal Legislative Assembly.]
4. Ali, Mr. Altaf. [Bengal Legislative Assembly.]
5. Aziz, Khan Sahib Abdul. [Presidency Division South Muhammadan (Rural).]

B

6. Baksh, Mr. Kader. [Bengal Legislative Assembly.]
7. Banerjee, Rai Bahadur Keshab Chandra. [Dacca Division North-General (Rural).]
8. Barua, Mr. Dhirendra Lal. [Chosen by the Governor.]

C

9. Chakraverti, Mr. Srish Chandra. [Calcutta General (Urban).]
10. Chaudhury, Mr. Moazzemali *alias* Lal Mia. [Faridpur Muhammadan (Rural).]
11. Chowdhury, Khan Bahadur Abdul Hamid. [Mymensingh West Muhammadan (Rural).]
12. Chowdhury, Mr. Khorshed Alam. [Bakarganj Muhammadan (Rural).]
13. Chowdhury, Khan Bahadur Rezzaqul Haider. [Noakhali Muhammadan (Rural).]
14. Chowdhury, Mr. Hamidul Huq. [Bengal Legislative Assembly.]
15. Chowdhury, Mr. Humayun Reza. [Rajshahi *cum* Malda Muhammadan (Rural).]
16. Cohen, Mr. D. J. [Chosen by the Governor.]

D

17. Das, Mr. Lalit Chandra. [Chittagong Division General (Rural).]
18. Datta, Mr. Bankim Chandra. [Bengal Legislative Assembly.]
19. Datta, Mr. Narendra Chandra. [Bengal Legislative Assembly.]
20. D'Rozario, Mrs. K. [Chosen by Governor.]
21. Dutta, Mr. Kamini Kumar. [Bengal Legislative Assembly.]

E

22. Esmail, Khan Bahadur Alhadj Khwaja Muhammad. [Dacca North-West Muhammadan (Rural).]

F

23. Ferguson, Mr. R. W. N. [Bengal Legislative Assembly.]

G

24. Goswami, Mr. Kanai Lal. [Calcutta Suburbs General (Urban).]

H

25. Hosain, Khan Bahadur Saiyed Muazzamuddin. [Bengal Legislative Assembly.]
26. Hossain, Mr. Latafat. [Chosen by the Governor.]
27. Hossain, Mr. Mohamed. [Bengal Legislative Assembly.]

J

28. Jan, Alhadj Khan Bahadur Shaikh Muhammad. [Calcutta and Suburbs Muhammadan (Urban).]

K

29. Kabir, Mr. Humayun. [Bengal Legislative Assembly.]
30. Karim, Khan Bahadur M. Abdul. [Mymensingh East Muhammadan (Rural).]
31. Khan, Khan Bahadur Muhammad Asaf. [Rangpur Muhammadan (Rural).]
32. Khan, Maulana Muhammad Akram. [Bengal Legislative Assembly.]

L

33. Laidlaw, Mr. W. B. G. [European.]

M

34. McFarlane, Mr. J. [European.]
35. Maitra, Rai Bahadur Brojendra Mohan. [Rajshahi Division South-West General (Rural).]
36. Molla, Khan Sahib Subidali. [Bengal Legislative Assembly.]
37. Momin, Begum Hamida. [Chosen by the Governor.]
38. Mookerjee, Mr. Naresh Nath. [Bengal Legislative Assembly.]
39. Mookerji, Dr. Radha Kumud. [Bengal Legislative Assembly.]

N

40. Nimmo, Mr. T. B.

P

41. Pal Chaudhuri, Mr. Ranajit. [Presidency Division General (Rural).]

Q

42. Quasem, Khan Sahib Abul. [Bengal Legislative Assembly.]

R

43. Rahman, Khan Bahadur Ataur. [Presidency Division North Muhammadan (Rural).]
44. Rahman, Khan Bahadur Mukhlesur. [Rajshahi Division North Muhammadan (Rural).]
45. Rashid, Khan Bahadur Kazi Abdur. [Dacca South-East Muhammadan (Rural).]
46. Ray, Mr. Nagendra Narayan. [Bengal Legislative Assembly.]
47. Ray, Rai Sahib Jogendra Nath. [Burdwan Division North-East General (Rural).]

48. Ray, Dr. Kumud Sankar. [Dacca Division South General (Rural).]
49. Ross, Mr. J. B. [Bengal Legislative Assembly.]
50. Roy, Mr. Amulya Dhone. [Bengal Legislative Assembly.]
51. Roy, Rai Bahadur Radhica Bhusan. [Bengal Legislative Assembly.]
52. Roy Chowdhury, Mr. Krishna Chandra. [Chosen by the Governor.]
53. Roy Chowdhury, Mr. Birendra Kishore. [Bengal Legislative Assembly.]

S

54. Sanyal, Mr. Sachindra Narayan. [Bengal Legislative Assembly.]
55. Sen, Rai Sahib Jatindra Mohan. [Rajshahi Division North-West (Rural).]
56. Shamsuzzoha, Khan Bahadur M. [Bengal Legislative Assembly.]
57. Singh Roy, the Hon'ble Sir Bijoy Prasad. [Bengal Legislative Assembly.]
58. Sinha, Raja Bahadur Bhupendra Narayan, of Nashipur. [Bengal Legislative Assembly.]

T

59. Talukdar, Dr. Kasiruddin. [Bogra *cum* Pabna Muhammadan (Rural).]
60. (Vacant.) Burdwan Division South-West General (Rural).
61. (Vacant.) Tippera Muhammadan (Rural).
62. (Vacant.) Bengal Legislative Assembly.
63. (Vacant.) Bengal Legislative Assembly.

BENGAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DEBATES

First Session, 1943—No. 1.

THE COUNCIL met in the Legislative Chamber of the Legislative Building, Calcutta, on Friday, the 12th February, 1943, at 2-15 p.m., being the first day of the First Session of 1943, pursuant to section 62(2)(*a*) of the Government of India Act, 1935.

Mr. Deputy President (Khan Bahadur ABDUL HAMID CHOWDHURY) was in the Chair.

Condolence Resolution and Obituary Reference.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: Mr. Deputy President, Sir, it is with a heart full of sorrow that I have to announce the passing away of Sir Thomas Lamb, a member of this House and one of our colleagues from the land of the living, which sad event took place the day before yesterday in a Nursing Home in this city of Calcutta. I accordingly beg to place the following resolution before the House for its acceptance, namely:—"That the Bengal Legislative Council, of which the late Sir Thomas Lamb was a distinguished member, hereby places on record its deep sense of sorrow in his death and begs to extend its sincerest sympathy to the members of the bereaved family."

Sir, Sir Thomas Lamb was a prominent public man of this city, having risen to a very eminent position from the lowest rung of the ladder. He was a distinguished sportsman and twice he was elected to the Bengal Legislative Council during the space of six years. It is unnecessary for me to dilate on the virtues of a man with whom we have been associated for more than 5 years. I can only say that by his affability of manners and geniality of temperament he had endeared himself to all sections of the House irrespective of nationality or creed. He was the very pink of courtesy; he was noble in his thoughts and ideals and he was meek and lowly as a "lamb". One who has come in closer contact with him during these years must have learnt a great lesson from him, namely, that "let the head grow wise but keep the heart ever young". It will be long, indeed it will be very long, before the memory of a man like him fades away from our recollection. May Peace rest on his Soul!

I also desire that the condolences of this House be conveyed to Lady Lamb and her children who are now in England. In conclusion I would request the Chair to suspend the business of today as a mark of respect to his memory.

Mr. J. B. ROSS: Sir, I rise to support the resolution so ably moved by the Leader of the House. I also support his suggestion that this House should send a message of condolence to the late Sir Thomas Lamb's family and I also support the suggestion that as a mark of respect to the memory of the late Sir Thomas Lamb this House should adjourn for the day without transacting any further business.

By the sudden death of Sir Thomas Lamb this House has lost a well-beloved member and the European Party an invaluable colleague. Although his voice was not heard frequently within these precincts, his influence not only with the Party which I have the honour to lead here but with all sections of the House was great indeed and his practical outlook and advice on the various problems with which we had been confronted from time to time during recent sessions was of the utmost value and was highly appreciated by those who were privileged to come in contact with him. Always of a cheery disposition and with a kind word for every one, irrespective of party, caste or creed, he made many staunch friends in the Council with whom his memory will be cherished for years to come. Although he attained high distinction in the course of his career, he never lost his natural courtesy and charm and was easy of approach by rich and poor alike. He made the poor and infirm in this city his particular personal concern and through his efforts the District Charitable Society and other charitable organisations were able to give effective relief where it was most urgently required. His name will remain ever blessed by many a poor family into whose home he introduced a ray of sunshine when the outlook was one of hopelessness. No genuine appeal to his generosity ever went unheeded. Many young Anglo-Indian lads owe to the late Sir Thomas Lamb's personal interest in their future the fact that they are today on the threshhold of a business career. The head of an important firm in Calcutta, his business made very exacting demand on his time; but in spite of this he employed such leisure as was available to him in widespread public activities, such as the Auxiliary Force, the Church, politics and sports, in addition to his indefatigable efforts in the sphere of charity. Verily, he was an outstanding example for all of us of the perfect altruist. I was privileged to claim him as a personal friend and am therefore able to testify to his great strength of character, his integrity and his uprightness. Truly, it may be said that he walked erect in the sight of his God and feared no man for he had no enemies. His exit from this life in the midst of his activities was as he would have desired it. Not only in this House but throughout this great city, for which he has done so much in his unassuming manner, will his untimely demise be looked upon as a calamity and he will indeed be sadly missed. May God rest his soul in peace!

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Sir, on behalf of myself as well as of the party to which I have the honour to belong, I fully associate myself with what has fallen from the Leader of the House. We all knew Sir Thomas Lamb here as the pink of courtesy and as a gentleman of equal integrity and honesty. His smiling face can never be forgotten by anybody here. He was in the best of health when we last saw him and we could not dream even that he would pass away so soon. I need add very little to what has already been stated by the Leader of the House. We only pray that his soul may rest in peace!

Raja BHUPENDRA NARAYAN SINHA Bahadur, of Nashipur: I beg to associate myself with what has been stated by the Leader of the House in offering our humble tribute to the memory of the late Sir Thomas Lamb.

He was full of vigour and health when we saw him here on the last occasion. We could not imagine then that his end would come so soon. It was an unexpected shock to us all. As a matter of fact, we were thunderstruck when we read the news of his sudden demise in the papers. Sir Thomas Lamb was not only a business magnate but a politician too. Within the course of the last six years he had been twice elected to this Council. He had also been a member of the old Legislative Council and I had the privilege and honour of being his colleague at that time. This House has suffered a great loss, but the worst sufferer is the European Group of which he was a member. Sir Thomas Lamb was not only a prominent figure in the political circle but was also a well-known figure on the playground. He was a sportsman and in his younger days he took active part in the Calcutta Football Club of which he had been the President for a long time. His smiling countenance and loving mood will ever be remembered by the House.

Sir, it is really unfortunate that this House, whenever it meets, has to perform the melancholy duty of recording the demise of some of our honourable colleagues. On the last occasion we did so on the demise of the Hon'ble President and not only that on the subsequent day we had to mourn the death of my friend Rai Bahadur Manmatha Nath Bose. Now, today, the first day of the session, we have to perform the same melancholy duty of recording our deepest condolence on the death of Sir Thomas Lamb. I must offer my deepest sympathy and condolences not only on my behalf but on behalf of the party to which I have the honour to belong to the members of the bereaved family. I beg to support the resolution so ably moved by the Leader of the House and also support the idea that the House should adjourn the business of the day in memory of the late Sir Thomas Lamb.

May he rest in peace in Heaven!

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: Mr. Deputy President, Sir, on behalf of myself and on behalf of the party to which I have the honour to belong, we associate ourselves wholeheartedly with every word that has fallen from the lips of the Hon'ble the Leader of the House and also with what has fallen from the lips of the previous speakers. Sir, within the last six months we have had to mourn the loss of several members of this House. I believe Sir Thomas Lamb is the fourth member who has passed away. It only reminds us that we are living in the midst of death. He has been snatched away from out midst at an age which it cannot be said to be a very old age. I understand he was barely 60 years of age. He was a gentleman every inch of him. He was the pink of courtesy. He had smile for every member in this House. I had occasion to talk freely with him. I was always impressed with his genial personality. He mixed freely with the masses of the Indian people and sympathised with them deeply. In fact, his sympathies were genuine. Sir, he rose from the rank and file and became the head of a big firm. We on our side like to testify to the fact that as a member of this House he was helpful to the whole House. Sir, we indeed have lost a good friend and a good counsellor. We support also

that portion of the motion which desires that a message of condolence should be sent to the bereaved family. With these words, I support the motion.

Mr. BANKIM CHANDRA DUTTA: Mr. Deputy President, I rise humbly to associate myself and the party whom I represent here with all that have fallen from the Leader of the House as also from the other honourable members. Sir, I had occasion to come into touch with him not only in this House but also outside this House. I had the privilege of thus knowing him as a businessman and I shall ever remember gratefully the amount of kindest courtesy which I have always received from him. Sir, as my honourable friends have already said that there was one remarkable thing about him—his inimitable smiles—which won everybody who came into touch with him. The very first word he would utter would always be prefaced with a ready smile and followed up by humour and wit which is bound to leave a lasting impression on you. During the last session we lost a number of our members—and this session again we have to mourn the death of another beloved member. Let us not forget that we are destined to die and we are only waiting our turn to follow the steps of our deceased friends and relatives. Sir, I think there will be no two voices about his courtesy and about his character, and I feel that his passing away is not only a great loss to the particular party to which he belonged but also to this whole House. Sir, he was an ardent lover of the poor whom he never forgot in his life. Sir, we have lost in him today a good and great man. With these words, I wholeheartedly second the proposal of the Hon'ble Leader of the House that as a mark of respect for the deceased no further business of the House be done.

Mrs. K. D'ROZARIO: Sir, I would like to associate myself wholeheartedly with the sentiments so eloquently voiced by the Hon'ble the Leader of the House as well as by other honourable members. I wish to offer a tribute of respect to the memory of one who was known to be so great a friend to my community. That is all that I have to say, Sir.

Mr. SACHINDRA NARAYAN SANYAL: Mr. Deputy President, Sir, it is with a heavy heart that I rise to pay my humble tribute to the memory of Sir Thomas Lamb, whose familiar figure we shall see no more! We were personally known to each other for a pretty long time. He was a thorough sportsman all his life and it was in the field of sport that we became known to each other for the first time. He was an earnest and influential member of the Calcutta Football Club and he was also a member of the Mohan Bagan A. C. In the field of politics also we served side by side for more than one term and came to know each other very intimately. He possessed many qualities of head and heart. His broad heart and amiable disposition did not fail to attract those who ever came in contact with him. His charities, irrespective of caste or creed, are well known and he possessed philanthrophic ideas in a rare degree, and, above all, his genuine qualities as a fine and courteous gentleman never failed to inspire confidence and attachment in his friends. May his soul rest in peace!

Khan Bahadur NAZIRUDDIN AHMAD: Mr. Deputy President, Sir, I need hardly add anything to what has been already said about the late Sir Thomas Lamb, but I desire to have the honour of being associated with this occasion. He possessed a ripe judgment but a youthful heart and he was amiability personified. He never required any introduction to any society; his pleasant qualities were a sufficient introduction. He was loved by Indians and Europeans alike. He was, if I may be permitted to say, a living cement between the East and the West. Whenever he entered the Chamber he was always beaming with smiles and members vied with each other in seeking his acquaintance first. He was so pleasant, so welcome was his appearance that at the very first sight he converted me to one of his staunchest, though one of his humblest, friends. I sincerely associate myself with all that has been said in this House and I support the resolution.

Mr. KRISHNA CHANDRA ROY CHOWDHURY: Mr Deputy President, Sir, it gladdens my heart to see the tributes of respect paid to the memory of Sir Thomas Lamb from almost all sections of the House. I would like to record my deep sense of sorrow at the demise of such a good man as "Tommy" Lamb, the name by which he was known all over Clive Street. I was intimately associated with him for more than 20 years ever since the old Council used to be held at Town Hall and I would only say that he was a model employer. He treated his workmen as his friends and he would talk with the coolies and workmen of his jute mills in a friendly manner. He occasionally stayed in the factories under his Companies' management so that he might come in contact with his workmen. When there was a very big strike in the jute mills in 1923 he was a prominent member of the then Legislative Council and his intervention for a settlement is on record, as also his other acts in connection with labour troubles. He was well known for his amiability, his kindness and his generosity, and I hope every industrial employee should follow in his foot-steps and take him as a model.

Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR: Sir, I would also associate myself with the remarks that have fallen so far from the members of this House in tribute to the head and heart of the late Sir Thomas Lamb. I had the privilege of knowing him as a member of the Council. His qualities of head and heart, as is known to the members of this House, his geniality of temper, his affability and his sweetness of disposition, made him dear to every one who has come in contact with him. In political questions there has always been difference of opinion between different parties in the House, but Sir Thomas Lamb was equally friendly towards every party and every section here. He was well known even long before he came to this House. As students we knew him as "Tommy Lamb," a well-known figure in the Calcutta Football "field". There also he made every one his friend by his sweetness of disposition and by his geniality. Perhaps there are very few members in this House of whom it can be said that they have no enemies and many friends; but of Sir Thomas Lamb it can be said that he

had no enemies. I wish to place on record my deep sense of sorrow at the loss which the House and the city of Calcutta has suffered by the death of Sir Thomas Lamb.

Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: Sir, it is my melancholy privilege to associate myself wholeheartedly with the resolution which has been eloquently moved by the Leader of the House. By the death of Sir Thomas Lamb, in common with many honourable members, I have lost a personal friend with whom I had the privilege of being associated for nearly 18 years in different Legislatures. A soldier and a sportsman, the late Sir Thomas Lamb was universally popular not only among the Europeans in Calcutta but also among the Indians. He was connected, I should say closely connected, with several sporting clubs and organisations in this city. His death has removed a genial personality, a true friend and one of those towering personalities who are unfortunately becoming rarer and rarer every day. I knew Sir Thomas Lamb intimately and I would say without fear of contradiction that he was one of the greatest supporters of Indian aspirations and he always liked to help the advancement of constitutional progress in this country. We deeply mourn his loss. May his soul rest in peace!

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Chair associates itself with the condolence resolution so feelingly moved by the Leader of the House and with the observations that have fallen from the lips of the leaders of different groups and deeply mourns the loss of an illustrious member of this House. As the honourable members here have already heard, Sir Thomas Lamb came out to India from England in 1909 as an assistant in a jute mill firm and from that humble beginning he rose by dint of his own merits to the eminent position of senior Director of a group of jute mills. He is well known for his manifold activities and he was directly connected with many associations of public utility.

He was a keen sportsman and, as all lovers of the "handling code" know, he was a well-known player, having kept goal in his younger days brilliantly for the Calcutta Football Club for many a season. He was also for some time President of the Indian Football Association and of the Calcutta Football Club.

He was an honorary A. D. C. to the Viceroy and the knighthood which he so fully deserved was conferred on him in 1939. As a member of this House it is not frequently that we had the pleasure of hearing him, but when he rose to speak he always convinced the House by his weighty and reasonable arguments and by his genial personality he had rendered himself quite popular with his colleagues representing all sections of this House.

His moral integrity, buoyant disposition, shrewd judgment, his sterling qualities of head and heart and above all his innate courtesies endeared himself to all who worked for him and who came in contact with him.

May his soul rest in peace!

Now, ladies and gentlemen, I would request you to rise in your places as a mark of respect to the memory of the illustrious deceased.

(Honourable members rose in their seats.)

Thanks, ladies and getlemen. It will be my duty to see that the message of condolence is duly conveyed to the members of the bereaved family.

In accepting the suggestion of the House and as a token of respect to the memory of the illustrious dead, I propose to adjourn the House now without transacting any other business. The House stands adjourned till Wednesday, the 17th February, 1943.

Adjournment.

The Council then adjourned till 2-15 p.m. on Wednesday, the 17th February, 1943.

Members absent.

The following members were absent from the meeting held on the 12th February, 1943:—

(1) Mr. Humayun Reza Chowdhury.

(2) Mr. Narendra Chandra Datta.

(3) Mr. Kamini Kumar Dutta.

(4) Mr. Mohamed Hossain.

(5) Khan Bahadur Muhammad Asaf Khan.

(6) Dr. Radha Kumud Mookerji.

BGP-43/4-88A-750

BENGAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DEBATES

First Session, 1943—No. 2.

THE COUNCIL met in the Legislative Chamber of the Legislative Building, Calcutta, on Wednesday, the 17th February, 1943, at 2-15 p.m. being the second day of the First Session of 1943, pursuant to section 62(2)(*a*) of the Government of India Act, 1935.

Mr. Deputy President (Khan Bahadur ABDUL HAMID CHOWDHURY) was in the Chair.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Questions with Answers which remained unanswered during the Second Session, 1942.

Sugar Enquiry Sub-Committee.

1. Rai Bahadur BROJENDRA MOHAN MOITRA (on behalf of Khan Bahadur Ataur Rahman): (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce, Labour and Industries Departments be pleased to state if there was a Sugar Enquiry Sub-Committee on Sugar Industry in Bengal under the Bengal Industrial Survey Committee?

(*b*) If so, has the said Sub-Committee submitted any report? If so, when?

(*c*) What action has been taken by the Government on the said report?

(*d*) Do the Government propose to accept the recommendation of the Sugar Enquiry Committee regarding the establishment of the Sugar Board and its executive machinery?

MINISTER in charge of the INDUSTRIES, COMMERCE and LABOUR DEPARTMENTS (the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) Yes. On the 28th July, 1942.

(*c*) The recommendations of the Committee are now under examination.

(*d*) This recommendation will also be examined along with others.

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: Are the recommendations of the Sugar Enquiry Sub-Committee under examination? What is the exact date when these recommendations were given?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: It is not possible to give the exact date. I want notice.

Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if any plans have been formulated by the Government on the basis of these recommendations?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: No plans can be formulated before the examinations are complete.

Cholera in the Murshidabad town.

2. Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) if he is aware that several fatal cases of cholera have occurred within the Murshidabad Municipality during the month of October, 1942; and

(*b*) whether the situation has now been brought under control?

MINISTER in charge of the PUBLIC HEALTH and LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu): Yes.

Assistant Director of Agriculture.

3. Khan Bahadur REZZAQUL HAIDER CHOUDHURY: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture and Co-operative Credit and Rural Indebtedness Department be pleased to state when the present Assistant Director of Agriculture is going to retire?

(*b*) Is it a fact that the Government contemplate to recruit candidates direct from outside?

(*c*) If so, what is the reason for ignoring the claims of the experienced officers who are working in this Department for years with credit?

(*d*) Is it a fact that there are officers in this Department who officiated in this post with success?

(*e*) Do the Government propose to fill this post by promotion from amongst the successful officers of the Department?

(*f*) Is it a fact that the officers recruited from Madras, the Punjab and the United Provinces cannot speak in Bengali even after serving for some years in this Department?

(*g*) Do the Government propose to lay down knowledge in Bengali as an essential qualification for appointment in the Agricultural Department?

MINISTER in charge of the AGRICULTURE and CO-OPERATIVE CREDIT and RURAL INDEBTEDNESS DEPARTMENTS (the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Hashem Ali Khan): (*a*) He retired on the 9th December, 1942.

(*b*), (*c*) and (*e*) Government have appointed as Assistant Director an officer already serving in the Province.

(*d*) One officer of the Department has officiated on two occasions, but he has not got the requisite agricultural qualifications for holding the post permanently.

(*f*) and (*g*) Officers recruited from outside the Province are required to pass an examination in Bengali by the higher standard during their probationary periods and the confirmed officers should therefore be able to speak in Bengali.

Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR: Arising out of answer to (*f*) and (*g*), are they as a matter of fact able to speak in Bengali?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I have no personal experience, and as I have not come in contact with them as yet, I cannot say.

Weavers' Co-operative Societies.

4. Mr. BIRENDRA KISHORE ROY CHOWDHURY: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture and Co-operative Credit and Rural Indebtedness Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) the total number of Co-operative Societies established up to date among the weavers in Bengal;

(*b*) the total number of members of these societies;

(*c*) the proportion of this number to the total number of weaver population in Bengal; and

(*d*) the functions of these societies?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: (*a*) 355.

(*b*) 5,467.

(*c*) 2·3 per cent.

(*d*) The functions of the societies are to organise weavers, supply them with yarn and other materials and also improved appliances, teach them better methods of weaving and improved designs and also arrange for the sale of the finished products to the best possible advantage.

Point of Information.

Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR: Sir, before you take up any other matter may I draw your attention to a question affecting the privileges of this House? Some time last session when the Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu was going to present the Report of the Select Committee on the Bengal Local Self-Government (Amendment) Bill, 1937, you, Sir, raised a point of order as to whether such a report could be presented in view of the fact that Mr. Basu was the Chairman of the Committee and it was doubtful whether a member of another House could be the Chairman of a Select Committee of this House. No ruling was given on this point of order then. A ruling had however once been given by our the then Hon'ble President that even if a Chairman was not a member of this House, the proceedings of the Select Committee were not void. I would therefore request the Chair that till this question is decided, my Bill might at any rate be allowed to be proceeded with. We have had in the past several Bills which were referred to Select Committees. Members of

another House were elected as Chairman in those cases. I would therefore request you to give a decision on this matter, not a ruling; as a point of order has got to be raised afresh by someone else. It will suit my purpose if you give a decision that the matter may be proceeded with. As it is, there is a sort of deadlock in regard to this Bill. A notice for taking the Select Committee's report into consideration was given by me but since the report has not been placed before the House it cannot be proceeded with. Therefore, I would request you, Sir, to allow the matter to be proceeded with and then a decision on the point of order might be given at a later stage.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: When I raised that point of order, I expected a ruling from the Chair; but it is our great misfortune that before a ruling could be given the Hon'ble President died. During the last session I was waiting for the election of a President and I thought that it was but proper that the ruling on the point should be given by the newly-elected President. As I myself raised the point, I was hesitating to give a ruling on a point raised by myself. However, if such a necessity arises, I shall certainly discharge that function. I have however been told by some honourable members that they are anxious to discuss the matter on the floor of the House. So, if a date is fixed for the discussion of this point then I shall be very glad to hear the views of the honourable members and give my final decision.

Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR: May I request that pending a final decision the Bill may at any rate be proceeded with, as in the case of many other Bills of this nature which were considered by the House, passed and actually enacted? Till a final decision is given on this point, may not the Bill be proceeded with in the first instance?

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Personally I have not the least objection to this course if the House decides in that way.

Change in the hours of sitting.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: There is one other point, Sir. Of late the Lower House is sitting from 3-15 p.m. as it did yesterday and it may be we shall have to alter our time accordingly. If we have got to sit in the mornings, then I think the hours from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. may probably be suitable. (Interruptions and protests.) Of course, that is my own personal opinion and other leaders of parties will have to be consulted.

Rai Bahadur KESHAB CHANDRA BANERJEE: Sir, this question also arose on several occasions in the past. When the Assembly used to sit in the morning, the time of the Council meetings was not disturbed. We have been sitting every afternoon at 2-15 and if we have to attend in the morning, many of us will not be able to attend. So I think if the Lower House sticks to its previous practice, no difficulty is likely to arise.

Mr. KAMINI KUMAR DUTTA: As to the time, Sir, certainly we would like the present time to continue, namely, from 2-15 to 4-15 p.m. But if it is impossible then the alternative may be 9-30 to 11-30 in the morning: but we all prefer the afternoon sittings.

Mr. J. B. ROSS: Mr. Deputy President, this party is in favour of no change in the time. We prefer to sit from 2-15 to 4-15 p.m. But if it is necessary to make a concession to meet the convenience of the members of the Assembly, I would suggest that we might go so far as to sit earlier by half an hour, that is from 1-45 which would enable us to finish at 3-45 p.m. and the Assembly could then sit from 4 o'clock. I feel that if we possibly can we should retain our right to sit in the afternoon.

Raja BHUPENDRA NARAYAN SINHA Bahadur, of Nashipur: Sir, my party prefers the present time, namely, from 2-15 to 4-15 p.m. But if it is not possible, then, as suggested by my friend Mr. Ross, the time of sitting might be from 1-45 to 3-30 or 3-45 p.m. But failing even that the House might sit from 9-30 a.m. in the morning: we however prefer afternoon sittings.

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: Sir, we would like the present timing to continue, that is from 2-15 p.m. If it is not possible to get this time, then we may have the sitting from 9-30 a.m. to 11-30 a.m.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, the question that has just arisen was discussed and the Ministers take the view that it would be inconvenient for them to be attending Legislature in the morning and then again in the afternoon. This will very much interfere with the office work. I think there is some point in the suggestion to have the sittings of the Legislatures in the afternoon continuously so that we can be free from our normal duties by the time that the sittings of the Legislatures begin. As at present arranged, the Assembly meets or is to meet at 4-15 p.m., except on those days when there are no sittings in the Upper House, and in those days the Assembly meets at 3-15 p.m.: that of course has nothing to do with the Upper House. So at present the position is that the Upper House can have sittings from 2-15 to 4-15 p.m. or from 2 to 4 p.m.—that of course is a different matter. After all it is two hours' sitting that the Council wants, —either two hours in the morning from 9-30 a.m. or two hours in the afternoon from 2 p.m. I submit that so far as we are concerned, it would be convenient to stick to the present arrangement. But I have not had the privilege of discussing the matter with the leaders of the other parties and I am only giving the House the opinion that we hold at present.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Sir, may I point out one thing? It will be very difficult for us to sit at 2 p.m. on Fridays because of our *Jumma* prayers. The present Indian Standard Time means 1-24 p.m. Calcutta Time and we generally finish our prayers by 1-30 p.m. So, I hope the Hon'ble the Chief Minister will kindly consider this aspect of the question.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, the *nemaz* is generally over by 1-30 p.m. and I do not think there will be very great hardship to attend the sitting at 2 p.m.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: But the new Indian Standard Time is not the old Standard Time and after finishing *Jumma* prayers on Fridays in the mosque it will be very difficult to attend the sitting at 2 p.m. due to the shortage of buses. That is the difficulty. I speak from personal experience.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I also speak from personal experience. But the point is this: 2 o'clock means 1 o'clock old Standard Time which means 1-24 p.m. Calcutta Time and by 1-24 p.m. Calcutta Time we finish our prayers. But if it is very great hardship to sit at 2 p.m. on Fridays, we may sit at 2-15 p.m. on Fridays. May I also suggest that without discussing this thing in the House we might consult the Party Leaders in the Deputy President's Chamber and the House might be adjourned for 10 minutes to discuss this matter.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Sir, there is another point. From the programme that has been circulated to us, it appears that official business has been allotted on Friday and Saturday, the 27th February has also been assigned for official business. We have always had Saturdays as off days, and the mofussil members go away to their constituencies on the week-end and Fridays are generally reserved for non-official business. So we are being deprived of our privileges in these respects.

Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: Sir, about the point which we were just discussing—about our sitting time—what is the decision? I understand that there is no proposal from Government side for a change of time. I mean—they do not find it inconvenient to make the Lower House sit at the usual time. So, where is the point in altering our sitting hours?

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The other House cannot commence its sitting later than 4-15 p.m. So the proposal coming from the Government side is to begin our work 15 minutes earlier, i.e., at 1-45 p.m. instead of at 2 p.m. The Party Leaders may intimate to me their unanimous decision after consultation amongst themselves.

As regards the point raised by the Leader of the Opposition on the question of sitting of the House on Fridays, there is one difficulty. As the time for sitting of the House on Friday is fixed by the Governor in his individual judgment, so if any change is to be made I think it will have to be made with the consent of His Excellency.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Will Mr. Deputy President please ascertain the views of the honourable members on the subject and communicate them to the House?

Mr. J. B. ROSS: Can we not have the opinion of the Party Leaders on the floor of the House so that we may discuss and give our verdict here?

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I think discussion among the members will be facilitated if I adjourn the House for 15 minutes.

Order, order. The House stands adjourned for 15 minutes.

(*After adjournment.*)

Rai Bahadur KESHAB CHANDRA BANERJEE: The Party Leaders have met and they are unanimously of the opinion that the House should sit on all days from 2 to 4 p.m. excepting on Fridays when the House will meet at 2-15 p.m. There should be no sitting on Saturdays.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: You have decided that the Council should sit from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. But, it has been pointed out to us that the Lower House is very keen for three hours' sitting and the members thereof also are very keen that they may disperse fifteen minutes before it becomes actually dark, namely, 6-45 p.m. So, even if they can be persuaded to sit at 3-45 p.m as the Upper House demands, then from that point of view the suggestion made by my honourable friend is not a solution of the problem. The alternative suggestions are that the Lower House should sit in the morning for two hours from 9-30 to 11-30 and the Upper House should sit from 1-30 to 3-30. But we realise that it will be inconvenient for the European Party if they were to sit at 1-30 p.m.——

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I am very sorry to interrupt the Hon'ble Minister, but I must remind him that we shall have to conclude our deliberations today not later than 3-45 p.m., and he has still to present the budget. May I know how long he will take to make his budget statement?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I will take five or ten minutes only.

As I was saying, Sir, if the House sits at 1-30 p.m. then my friends of the European Party may come a little later because the first few minutes, say 15 or 20 minutes, will be taken up by questions. Therefore I think we might begin at 1-30 p.m. and go on till 3-30 p.m.——

Mr. MESBAHUDDIN AHMED: But, Sir, the House does not consist of European members only? The convenience of other parties will also have to be considered——

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: ——except on Fridays when special arrangements will have to be made.

Mr. MESBAHUDDIN AHMED: 1-30 p.m. will be very inconvenient to us on this side of the House, Sir. It will be very difficult for us to attend at that hour.

Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR: We however prefer 1-30 p.m. to the morning sitting.

Mr. KAMINI KUMAR DUTTA: That is our view also. We object strongly to a morning sitting.

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Mr. J. B. ROSS: Mr. Deputy President, Sir, I think the attitude of the Assembly in demanding a three-hours' sitting under the present conditions is unreasonable. I have attended one or two debates in the Assembly recently and I find that if certain members of that House did not wilfully obstruct the business of the House, they could probably get most of the business through in about two and a half hours' time. Therefore, we should not be called upon to make room for certain members of that House to indulge in their favourite sport of obstructing the business of the House. We have our rights in this House and I propose, as a member who stands on that right, that the earliest that we can start is 1-45 p.m. and that we should have our full two hours.

Mr. KADER BAKSH: Sir, may I request that you may be pleased to grant us one day's time to think over the matter, so that the group leaders may consult the members of their parties, as neither the hours from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. nor from 1-45 p.m. to 3-45 p.m. will be at all convenient to us.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, order. I do not want to come to any final decision today before the House adjourns. I shall be extremely grateful if leaders of different parties in this House will be good enough to meet in my Chamber after adjournment, so that we may come to a conclusion and then announce the result on the floor of the House. Today, of course, I shall adjourn the House according to existing arrangements, unless the business is finished earlier.

Adjournment motions.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I have received as many as six notices for adjournment of the business of the House. But before I propose to enter into the merits or demerits or discuss the question of the admissibility or otherwise of these motions, I want to place certain facts before the House in general and before those honourable members who have given those notices in particular.

This is the budget session and today has been fixed for the presentation of the budget as well as for its discussion, by His Excellency the Governor, as I have already told you, in his individual judgment. So, if the House go on discussing these adjournment motions now, I am afraid the House will have to curtail the valuable time allotted for the discussion of the budget. Of course, I do not want to cast my personal views on a matter like this. I am always prepared to accede to the judgment of the House. In this connection, I may add that the subject matter of most of these motions may be fully discussed in the course of discussion of the budget itself. There are however one or two matters for which Government may be requested to allot one or two days, if the Opposition Benches agree to that proposal. Before I actually take up this matter, I want to know what is the decision of the House as regards taking up these adjournment motions, before the discussion of the budget actually takes place.

Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR: Sir, with regard to the first item I would through you request the Government as well as the members of the Opposition to have at least one full day for the discussion of food question in Bengal. I understand, Sir, that in another place two days have been allotted for the discussion of food question and special resolutions have been moved for that purpose. Here also I would request Government to allot us at least one or two days for discussing the food problem. I hope the Opposition will lend its support to my request, so that instead of having a fixed time we may have one or two days when we can discuss this all-important question at greater details.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Sir, this is an acceptable suggestion and we are agreeable if two days are allotted for considering the food question. Then, Sir, I would like you to examine the other adjournment motions to see if there are not one or two important motions on which it is desirable to have discussion: for example, the importation of surplus food from Assam which will automatically come up with the food question. (Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR: Also jute question.) Yes, jute question may also be taken up. The belated declaration of the jute forecast has seriously affected the cultivators.

Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR: Sir, may I through you request Government to allow a day for jute question, so that three days in all may be allotted for the benefit of the peasantry of Bengal.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: Sir, we are at one with Mr. Humayun Kabir in this matter.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: I think Government would be well-advised to give the honourable members of the House a day or two for the discussion of some of the most important questions of the day, namely, food question and other questions mentioned in these adjournment motions and I will see my way to have that sanction from the Governor.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Then the Leader of the Opposition agrees to the passing over of these adjournment motions?

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Yes, Sir, on the understanding that two days would be fixed for the discussion of the points mentioned in our adjournment motions.

Panel of Chairmen.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Under rule 6 of the Bengal Legislative Council Procedure Rules, I nominate—

(1) Mr. Kamini Kumar Dutta,
(2) Raja Bhupendra Narayan Sinha Bahadur, of Nashipur,
(3) Mr. J. B. Ross, and
(4) Khan Bahadur Saiyed Muazzamuddin Hosain,

on the Panel of Chairmen for the current session.

House Committee.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Under rule 122 of the Bengal Legislative Council Procedure Rules, I nominate—

(1) The Deputy President (Chairman, *ex-officio*),
(2) Mrs. K. D'Rozario,
(3) Mr. R. W. N. Ferguson,
(4) Mr. Dhirendra Lal Barua,
(5) Rai Radhica Bhusan Roy Bahadur,
(6) Mr. Moazzemali Chowdhury, and
(7) Mr. Ranajit Pal Chowdhury,

on the House Committee for the current session.

Governor-General's Assent to Bills.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I have to inform the honourable members that the following Bills which were passed by both Chambers of the Bengal Legislature have been assented to by His Excellency the Governor-General under the provisions of section 76 (*1*) of the Government of India Act, 1935, namely:—

(1) The Workmen's Compensation (Bengal Amendmenet) Bill, 1942.
(2) The Bengal Land Revenue Sales (Amendment) Bill, 1942.
(3) The Bengal Agricultural Debtors (Second Amendment) Bill, 1942.

Application for leave of absence.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The following application has been received from Mr. Narendra Chandra Datta, M.L.C., under sub-rule (*1*) of rule 7 of the Bengal Legislative Council Procedure Rules, for permission of absence:—

"As I am advised not to undertake long journey yet, so I am unable to attend the forthcoming Council session. I am, therefore, applying for leave of absence under rule 7 (*1*) of the Bengal Legislative Council Procedure Rules."

The question before the House is: that permission be granted to Mr. Narendra Chandra Datta, M.L.C., for the period of 60 days in continuation of the leave already granted to him.

The motion was agreed to.

Mr. MESBAHUDDIN AHMED: Sir, I regret to point out that in the House Committee there is no member taken from the Muslim League Party.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I have simply copied out the names which were recommended to constitute the House Committee by the late Hon'ble President as I did not like to introduce any change during the interim period.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: As if we are not part of the House?

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I am very sorry that this has been done through oversight. I am really sorry for it. If you insist, I may change the personnel.

Mr. KADER BAKSH: It is not a question of insisting, it is a question of fairness.

Laying of amendments to the Bengal Motor Vehicles Rules, 1940.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I beg to lay on the table amendments to the Bengal Motor Vehicles Rules, 1940.

Presentation of Budget.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The next item is "Presentation of the Budget". The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I rise to present to the Bengal Legislative Council the Budget Estimate for the year 1943-44. These estimates were presented to the other House yesterday, and in the statement which I made on that occasion I reviewed the financial results of the working of the year 1941-42 and of the current year and set forth in detail the budget proposals for the coming year. In accordance with usual practice, copies of the statement have been made available to honourable members for their convenience. With this statement before them I feel that honourable members would like me to confine my observations in this House to the principal features of the budget.

It is estimated that the coming year will start with an opening balance of a crore and fifty-four lakhs. The whole of this balance, however, is borrowed money. At the end of the current year we shall be owing India close upon four crores of rupees of which 2½ crores is in the nature of a ways and means advance and the balance represents advances in respect of the provincial share of poolable Civil Defence expenditure.

The revenue receipts for the coming year have been placed at 16 crores 2 lakhs and revenue expenditure at 17 crores 55 lakhs. There is, thus, a deficit on revenue account of a crore and fifty-three lakhs. The closing balance according to the estimates stands at 87 lakhs which is 67 lakhs less than the opening balance. In addition, our borrowing is expected to increase by a net amount of 75 lakhs owing to further advances from India on account of expenditure on Civil Defence measures. Such in outline are our budgetary prospects for the coming year.

If we look back for a moment to the year 1941-42 towards the close of which an intensification of Civil Defence measures became necessary as a result of Japan's entry into the war, we find that the revenue deficit in that year was a little over half a crore. Our estimates assume that the gap between revenue and expenditure will be further widened by a crore or so in the coming year, and this in spite of the fact that, thanks to the proceeds of our recent taxation measures and a larger yield from income-tax and excise, the total revenue next year is expected to be a crore and 8 lakhs

above the revenue in 1941-42. The fact is that our estimated expenditure in 1943-44 is some 2 crores higher than the actual expenditure in 1941-42. The larger part of this increase is attributable to the intensification of the Civil Defence measures, the expansion of the A.R.P. services and the Civic Guards and additional police for the protection of vulnerable points.

Over and above such measures there are a number of other items of expenditure, all connected directly or indirectly with the war, some of which appear for the first time in the revised estimates of the current year.

Dearness allowance is now costing us close on 60 lakhs a year. Other special allowances like the Police emergency, areas bonus and the separation allowance admissible to employees who remove their families to safer zones from particularly vulnerable areas account for a total of close upon 10 lakhs. There is a provision of 20 lakhs for the Home Guards Organisation which has been set up in rural areas with much the same duties as Civic Guards in towns; and a provision of 16 lakhs for the scheme for the control of vagrancy in Calcutta. The original scheme for the control of vagrancy has undergone considerable change and the annual recurring cost of the enlarged scheme is now placed at 9 lakhs.

Finally there is a provision of over 7 lakhs for the Directorate of Civil Supplies which has been set up with a view to ameliorate the difficulties of the supply situation and to ensure a rational and equitable distribution of supplies.

I do not propose to tire the patience of the House by going into further details since full particulars have been furnished in the Red Book which is now in the hands of the honourable members. The House will no doubt realise that a very heavy burden has been thrown on the revenues of the province by the war and that it is up to us to try and bear that burden to the utmost——

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: Sir, may I draw your attention to the fact that an honourable member of the Assembly is intruding into our Chamber?

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: We have become one member the more, Sir.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: As I was saying, Sir, it is up to us to try and bear that burden to the utmost limit of our capacity. And when in due course I approach the House with proposals for raising additional revenue, I hope I shall be favoured with the fullest measure of support and co-operation.

With these words, I finish my statement, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I adjourn the House till 2 p.m. tomorrow.

Adjournment.

The Council then adjourned till 2 p.m. on Thursday, the 18th February, 1943.

Members absent.

The following members were absent from the meeting held on the 17th February, 1943:—

(1) Khan Bahadur Naziruddin Ahmad.

(2) Mr. Humayun Reza Chowdhury.

(3) Mr. Khorshed Alam Chowdhury.

(4) Mr. Narendra Chandra Datta.

(5) Mr. Mohamed Hossain.

(6) Mr. Naresh Nath Mookerjee.

(7) Dr. Radha Kumud Mookerji.

(8) Dr. Kumud Sankar Ray.

BGP-43/4-89A-750

BENGAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DEBATES

First Session, 1943—No. 3.

THE COUNCIL met in the Legislative Chamber of the Legislative Building, Calcutta, on Thursday, the 18th February, 1943, at 2 p.m. being the third day of the First Session of 1943, pursuant to section 62(2)(a) of the Government of India Act, 1935.

Mr. Deputy President (Khan Bahadur ABDUL HAMID CHOWDHURY) was in the Chair.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Before we proceed to the business on the agenda I want to consult with the leaders of the different groups on a matter of importance. Therefore I shall be grateful if the leaders will please come to my Chamber and give their opinion in the matter. We shall have a free discussion there before we come to a decision. So I adjourn the House for 20 minutes.

(The House was accordingly adjourned for 20 minutes.)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Manufacture of paper.

5. Khan Bahadur SAIYED MOAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce, Labour and Industries Department be pleased to state—

(a) what is the cost of manufacturing paper by hand-press and what is the cost of manufacturing the same in mills; and

(b) what stands in the way of Government's popularising the manufacture of paper by hand-press on an extensive scale?

MINISTER in charge of the COMMERCE, LABOUR and INDUSTRIES DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (a) The cost of manufacturing paper by hand-press under the present market condition is Rs. 10 per ream approximately. The cost of manufacturing the same in mills is not known, it being a trade secret which the mills will not disclose.

(b) Government have already launched a scheme for testing the commercial possibilities of manufacture of paper by hand-press for a period of 3 years terminating on the 30th June, 1944, as a condition precedent to any steps being taken for popularising the manufacture of the same on an extensive scale. A proposal for the entertainment of a suitable demonstration staff for the purpose of training skilled workers of which there is a great dearth at the present time, is, however, under the consideration of Government.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: Arising out of (b), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to give a general idea of the scheme which they have launched for testing the commercial possibilities of manufacture of paper by hand-press?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Sir, I shall take this as a notice and shall make a full statement on the subject, as early as possible.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: Arising out of (*b*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the proposal for the entertainment of a suitable demonstration staff is dependent on the testing scheme?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Will the honourable member kindly repeat his question?

In the first part of answer (*b*) it is said that nothing can be done until the result of the testing scheme is known. My question is—is the entertainment of the proposal of a suitable scheme dependent on the result of that testing scheme?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: After the report is received by Government it is possible to popularise the commercialisation of the manufacture of paper by hand-press; and there might be dearth of skilled workers: for this purpose Government have already prepared another scheme for the training of demonstration staff, so that there might be enough demonstrators to teach the people as to how to take up the scheme.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: Sir, the answer is not clear. After having said that nothing can be done until the result of the scheme launched is known, it is said that a proposal for the entertainment of a suitable demonstration staff for the purpose of training skilled workers is under consideration now. So how can it be taken up if nothing can be considered until the testing scheme is known. Will the Hon'ble Minister kindly make the point clear?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: We anticipate that commercial scheme will be coming very soon and for that purpose we have taken steps for teaching demonstrators so that when the scheme is ready and approved these men will be able to teach the people.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: May we take it then that Government is convinced of the great commercial possibility in hand-press scheme?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: If Government is convinced of the commercial value of the hand-press scheme then they would take up the scheme.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: If the testing scheme is unsatisfactory then what is the use of training these demonstration staff in advance?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: I said earlier that if the proposal is suitable these demonstrators will be ready to teach the people. Moreover when the time will come I will make a statement in the matter.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Since when this experiment on hand-press paper is going on?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: It has been given in the answer that "Government have already launched a scheme for testing the commercial possibilities of manufacture of paper by hand-press for a period of 3 years terminating on the 30th June, 1944....." So, the scheme must have started in 1941 or so.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that I myself saw this scheme in the Director's office—this scheme of paper being made out of water-hyacinth—in the year 1937?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: I do not know that: but as the honourable member says he saw it in 1937, it might be so.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister kindly enquire since how long this experiment has been going on?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Most certainly.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that only 8 months ago in reply to my question on this subject he stated that cost of manufacture of paper per ream from water-hyacinth was Rs. 2-3; how is it that he now gives Rs. 10 as the cost of manufacture of paper per ream?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: It may be that due to rise in prices of articles this increased cost has been mentioned.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state what is the present price of paper per ream? Rs. 10 is the cost of manufacture but what is the price?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: I want notice.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Are we then to understand that the Hon'ble Minister dealing with the manufacture of paper does not know the present price of paper?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Sir, I cannot be expected to know the price of all articles sold in Calcutta unless it is brought to my notice.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: The Hon'ble Minister ought to have expected supplementary questions like these when the notice of this question was given.

Price of cloth.

6. **Mr. LATAFAT HOSSAIN:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce, Labour and Industries Department be pleased to state whether he is aware that the price of common cloth has gone up by nearly 300 per cent.?

(*b*) What is the reason of such abnormal rise?

(*c*) Has there been any shortage of cotton?

(*d*) What the Government propose to do to mitigate the sufferings of the poorer classes due to abnormal rise in the price of cloth?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) Various factors are responsible for this rise, e.g., restriction of the supplies available for the civilian population owing to the requirements of the Army, cessation of imports of foreign yarn, rise in the price of cotton and consequent rise in the price of yarn, rise in the price of dyes, incidental charges such as premia on War Risks (Goods) Insurance and (Factories) Insurance Schemes, increased labour charges, etc.

(*c*) No.

(*d*) Standard cloth is expected to be placed on the market very soon and it has been decided that the sale of this cloth will be confined only to the poorer classes of the people.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps Government are taking to ensure that it is only to the poorer classes that this standard cloth should be made available? What Government mean by "poorer classes"? How they classify them?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Sir, the position is this: we have decided to make available these standard cloths to the jute-growing areas and then to the cyclone-affected areas of Midnapore and 24-Parganas. The *bustee* people in Calcutta and its suburbs will also get first preference in the distribution of standard cloths. The idea is to give this standard cloth to those people with very limited income.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: Sir, the Hon'ble Minister has not answered my question. My question is what is the test by which Government may know the real poorer classes. The Hon'ble Minister has given a territorial region where the standard cloth will be distributed as soon as they would be available in the market. But in the cyclone-affected areas there may be poorer classes and there may be richer classes. Does he mean that irrespective of classes—poorer or richer—these standard cloths will be distributed among the cyclone-affected people, irrespective of the station of living to which a particular man belongs?

Rai Bahadur KESHAB CHANDRA BANERJEE: On a point of order, Sir. Is any speech allowed in putting a supplementary question?

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: Speech is necessary when an Hon'ble Minister cannot understand a plain question. My question is what Government mean by the phrase "poorer classes".

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Sir, up to now that phrase has never been defined but I think by poorer classes we mean people with very limited means.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: How Government are going to find out who has got means and who has not?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Well, Sir, I may say the labourers and cultivators, etc., come under the category of poorer classes. Further than this I cannot add.

Rai Bahadur KESHAB CHANDRA BANERJEE: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether those who do not pay union rates and those who do not pay municipal rates are poor?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Yes, this is so.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: In view of the difficulty of getting foreign yarn, has the Government considered the desirability of introducing spinning wheels in an extensive scale?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: I don't think this question does arise here.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: In view of the difficulty of getting foreign yarn, has the Government considered the possibility of extensively producing yarns by spinning wheels?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Does it come within the purview of this question? I don't think it does. I ask Mr. Deputy President to give a ruling on this point.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: I ask another question. Rise in the price of cotton has been given as one of the causes in reference to (*b*), but in reference to (*c*) the Hon'ble Minister has said "No". So there is no shortage of cotton. Then what is the reason for the rise in the price of cotton?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Rise in the price of cotton does not depend only on the shortage of cotton. I have already mentioned in (*b*) that various factors are responsible for this rise; *e.g.*, transport difficulties, incidental charges such as premia on War Risks (Goods) Insurance, etc.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: My question is what steps Government are going to take to ensure that the standard cloth will be made available to the poorer classes?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: This is a question of action. I will make a statement on this question. I want notice.

Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR: Is there any shortage of cotton yarn at present?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: I want notice.

Mr. NARESH NATH MOOKERJEE: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what machinery Government propose to employ to distribute these cloths?—whether they will be sold by the Government themselves or by traders, or licensed shopkeepers, and also what steps they propose to take to prevent profiteering by middlemen and then being sold at unduly high profits?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Sir, may I humbly ask you as to how this question arises? If, however, fresh notice is given, I am prepared to answer the question. I submit that the question does not arise.

Mr. NARESH NATH MOOKERJEE: I maintain that the supplementary question arises out of (*b*), (*c*) and (*d*) of the question, namely, what is the reason of such abnormal rise, has there been any shortage of cotton, and what the Government propose to do to mitigate the sufferings of the poorer classes due to abnormal rise in the price of cloth. It also arises out of answer (*d*), where the Hon'ble Minister states that the sale of this cloth will be confined only to the "poorer classes" of the people. In view of the above, my question is as to what machinery Government will employ for their sale, whether they will hand the cloths over to the traders, who will be at liberty to make unduly high profits, that is how they will ensure that the cloths will be sold only to the "poorer classes" of the people. That is why I put this question, and I submit that it is in order.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Honourable members should know that a supplementary question arises only out of a reply given by an Hon'ble Minister and not out of the question itself.

Mr. NARESH NATH MOOKERJEE: I submit that my question arises out of answer (*d*).

Mr. KADER BAKSH: With reference to the answer given in (*b*), namely, that the cessation of imports of foreign yarn has been described as one of the causes of the rise in the price of common cloth, will the Hon'ble Minister please state if any action has been taken by Government to combat this cessation in the imports of foreign yarn and to supplement the deficiency by any other means?

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The answer is that Government has decided to take action.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: No, Sir. The Hon'ble Minister has nowhere said so.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Will the honourable member please repeat his question?

Mr. KADER BAKSH: In the answer (*b*) cessation of imports of foreign yarn has been described as a reason for the rise in the price of cotton goods. My question is whether any effective measures have been adopted by Government up till now to combat this cessation of imports of foreign yarn in any way.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: What does the honourable member mean by "combating the cessation of imports, etc."?

Mr. KADER BAKSH: That is to say, to supply the deficiency caused by the cessation of imports of foreign yarn.

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Sir, no possible steps can be taken by Government over matters that are beyond the control of the Provincial Government.

Mr. KADER BAKSH: If the Government are not in a position to control the position, have they left it to the people to control it themselves?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: May I point out, Sir, that the Government of Bengal have very little control over imports of goods coming from outside?

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Does the Hon'ble Minister say that they are powerless to prevent the rise of price to 300 per cent.?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Government have no authority over the foreign countries from where transports are made.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Does the Hon'ble Minister want to say that the Provincial Government has no power to fix the price of articles of import?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: As far as I am aware the fixation of price——

Mr. NARESH NATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, am I going to get an answer to my question which I put some time ago and to which no answer was given, or your decision on the point. I put a supplementary question arising out of reply (*d*)——

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: What was your question?

Mr. NARESH NATH MOOKERJEE: My supplementary question was: what agency Government propose to employ for the sale of standard cloth—what steps Government are taking to prevent middlemen's profit and undue profiteering?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: May I point out, Sir, that the question (*d*) is "what the Government propose to do to mitigate the sufferings of the poorer classes due to abnormal rise in the price of cloth"? To that the answer is "standard cloth is expected to be placed on the market very soon and it has been decided that the sale of this cloth will be confined only to the poorer classes of the people," how then, Sir, this question arises out of it? I submit that this question does not arise out of it.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Sir, the honourable member wants to know whether there will be an agency for the distribution of these cloths and, if so, what agency?

Rai Bahadur KESHAB CHANDRA BANERJEE: Sir, it is clear from the Hon'ble Minister's answer that Government have not come to any final decision with regard to details——

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Sir, the honourable member is answering the question for the Hon'ble Minister——

Rai Bahadur KESHAB CHANDRA BANERJEE: Government have not come to any decision as to how distribution will be made——(interruptions from the Opposition Benches).

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: What is your question, Rai Bahadur?

Rai Bahadur KESHAB CHANDRA BANERJEE: Sir, it is difficult to put questions if the honourable members opposite go on talking like that. My supplementary question is—is it not a fact that Government have not decided upon the details regarding the agency and other things? They have adopted the principle that the sale will be confined only to the poorer classes of the people.

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Yes, the question of distribution will be settled later on.

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that thousands of bales of standard cloth have already reached the Calcutta market and whether the Hon'ble Minister has seen this fact in papers?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: I am not aware of this fact.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: Arising out of (*d*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if, when a decision has been taken that the standard cloth will be confined to a certain section of the people exclusively, it has been decided also as to which agency Government will employ for the purpose of giving effect to this decision?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: This is a matter of action.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: Will the Hon'ble Minister kindly state what action they are going to take? Is not this House entitled to know what action they are going to take in this matter? Because, Sir, the Hon'ble Minister states that Government have taken a decision that standard cloth would be made available to poorer classes exclusively. So, in view of this decision what is the decision as to the particular agency through which this sale will be effected?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Sir, I am not prepared to disclose that now.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: Sir, may we know whether it is the trade secret of the Progressive Coalition Party?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, with your permission may I say a few words? We have just received information that in the very near future we will be supplied with standard cloth. The requirements of the various provinces will be taken into consideration and as soon as we can know our quota, we will be discussing the machinery by which this standard cloth would be distributed. So, the question of agency is now premature. As soon as facts are available we will discuss this question.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: After the appointment of the agent is made or before?

Chandina Committee.

7. Mr. LATAFAT HOSSAIN: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state when the Chandina Committee submitted its report to Government?

(*b*) Why no action is being taken on the recommendations of the Committee?

(*c*) When will the Government introduce the Non-Agricultural Tenancy Bill?

MINISTER in charge of the REVENUE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee): (*a*) In May, 1941.

(*b*) Government have decided to take action.

(*c*) As early as possible.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state why the Government did not take any action since 1941, that is, for nearly two years during which ime two temporary Bills have been passed suspending the action of the Civil Courts?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Due to Ministerial instability.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Are we to understand then that due to Ministerial instability all the ameliorative measures should be stopped?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Therefore the Ministry ought to be stable.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: Will the Hon'ble Ministers indulge in inactivity so long as the Ministry is instable?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: That is always the view of His Majesty's Opposition but not that of Government.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Are we going to get this Non-Agricultural Tenancy Bill during this year?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: No; but it will be introduced as early as possible.

Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the Bill will be introduced during this year?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I can only give hopes.

Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR: Shall we live on hopes here also as elsewhere?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: My honourable friend is a professor of literature and knows that hopes keep a man for ever green.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Or hoax?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Some people live in hopes and some people live on hoax.

Bengal Rent Reduction Committee.

8. **Mr. LATAFAT HOSSAIN:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) when the Bengal Rent Reduction Committee finished its deliberations;

(*b*) whether the Committee has submitted its report, and if so, when; and

(*c*) if any action has been taken on its recommendations?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: (*a*) The committee have not yet concluded their deliberations.

(*b*) and (*c*) Do not arise.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: When was the Committee appointed?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I believe, in 1939.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: How many sittings the Committee has had since it has been appointed. Has there been any sitting within the last one year?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I do not know. But I gave orders for expeditiously reporting to Government and I have been told by the Director of Land Records that the Committee will finish its deliberations within the next two or three months.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: Was there any meeting during the last one year?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Information is not available to me.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: Is the Hon'ble Minister discharging his duties properly?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: The Hon'ble Minister knows his duties. The Hon'ble Minister is fully aware of his duties in this matter. Mr. Deputy President, the difficulty is this. Due to war conditions, valuable records are not here, but if the honourable member insists upon it, the information will be made available to him later.

Consumers' Co-operative Societies.

9. **Mr. NUR AHMED:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture, Co-operative Credit and Rural Indebtedness Department be pleased to state if there are any Consumers' Co-operative Societies for the supply of the foodstuff and other necessaries of life in Bengal? If so, what is their number and at what place or places have they been established? If not, why not?

(*b*) Do the Government propose to establish such Consumers' Co-operative Societies at suitable places in Bengal without further delay? If not, why not?

(*c*) Have the Government advanced any long-term loans for the construction of godowns to all Co-operative Societies undertaking to market agricultural produce? If so, how much has been advanced up to the 30th September, 1942? If not, why not?

(*d*) Is he aware that the Government of Bombay have advanced large sum as long-term loans for the construction of godowns to all Co-operative Societies undertaking to market agricultural produce?

(*e*) Do the Government of Bengal propose to make advances by way of long-term loans for the construction of godowns to the Co-operative Societies in Bengal undertaking to market agricultural produce including jute? If not, why not?

MINISTER in charge of the AGRICULTURE, CO-OPERATIVE CREDIT and RURAL INDEBTEDNESS DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Hashem Ali Khan): (*a*) Yes. Fifty in different parts of the Province.

(*b*) Does not arise.

(*c*) No.

(*d*) I have no information.

(*e*) A scheme is under my consideration.

Jute is not included in the scheme.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: With reference to (*b*) "Does not arise", do the Government propose to establish Consumers' Co-operative Societies at suitable places without further delay? The question certainly arises, yes or no.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Government desire to establish a larger number of such societies in different parts of the province. Almost in every place I have been during the course of my tour I addressed lots of people in public meetings, and asked them to start Consumers' Co-operative Societies in well-known places, and in Calcutta also I have recently discussed with different sections of the people in the matter.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: The answer (*b*) "Does not arise" is then apparently a wrong answer.

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to answer the last portion of question No. (*a*) "at what place or places have they been established"?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I can give you the names of some of the important societies which are working well. They are as follows:—

(1) Police Training Co-operative Stores, Sardah.
(2) Dhakeswari Co-operative Stores, Dacca.
(3) Samavaya Bhandar, Sriniketan.
(4) Balurghat Co-operative Stores.
(5) Ichapur Co-operative Stores.
(6) Bengal Chemical Co-operative Stores.
(7) Bakarganj-Sundarbans Store and Supply Society.
(8) Co-operative Store at Gosaba.

These are the most successful ones.

Quinine and Cinchona.

10. Dr. KASIRUDDIN TALUKDAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Forest and Excise Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) if the Government are aware that Bengal is short of quinine and cinchona;

(*b*) what area of land is under cinchona cultivation under the Government of Bengal;

(*c*) what has been the cost of cultivation and what is the value of cinchona produced annually;

(*d*) what is the total requirement of cinchona in Bengal;

(e) what requirements of cinchona of other provinces and countries are met by this Province;

(f) what area is still available for cultivation of cinchona;

(g) what stands in the way of extending the area of cinchona cultivation in Bengal to make Bengal self-supporting in respect of cinchona and quinine; and

(h) whether the Government are unable to extend cultivation of cinchona; if so, what stands in the way of leasing out suitable lands to private individuals for such collection?

MINISTER in charge of the FOREST and EXCISE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Upendra Nath Barman: (a) Yes.

(b) About 10,000 acres.

(c) Present cost of production of quinine sulphate varies between Rs.18 to Rs.20 per pound.

(d) The total requirement as shown by past consumption is about 90,000 lbs.

(e) About 8,000 lbs. used to be supplied to Assam, Bihar and Orissa. The distribution of quinine has now been taken over by the Government of India in view of the emergent situation arising out of shortage of supply. That Government have allotted quotas to different provinces for consumption within the respective provinces.

(f) About 10,000 acres.

(g) Time is required for the cultivation of cinchona which takes about 8 years to mature. Government have already embarked on a programme of extension.

(h) Does not arise.

Dr. KASIRUDDIN TALUKDAR: Sir, with reference to my question (c), I wanted to know the total cost of cultivation and the total cost of the products produced, but the Hon'ble Minister has mentioned only the cost of production; that is not a proper answer, Sir.

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: The cost of cultivation of quinine and cinchona are so mingled together and are done on a common basis that it is difficult to separate them and say exactly what is the cost of cultivation and what is the price of the products produced of each of the items.

Dr. KASIRUDDIN TALUKDAR: May I know the total annual cost of production?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Sir, the question is what is the cost of cultivation and what is the value of the cinchona produced annually. If honourable members want to know the figure of production, then I can say that it is 50,000 lbs.

Dr. KASIRUDDIN TALUKDAR: In (*f*) it is said that there is still available for cultivation an extra 10,000 acres of land. Is that land now laid under cultivation?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Yes, the scheme is proceeding according to plan and every year about 300 acres are being brought under actual cultivation.

Dr. KASIRUDDIN TALUKDAR: In answer (*e*) it is stated that the Government of India have allotted quotas to different provinces for consumption of quinine; will the Hon'ble Minister please state what poundage has been allotted to Bengal?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Well, the scheme is that about 75 per cent. of the annual average consumption of the last three years will be allotted to this province.

Dr. KASIRUDDIN TALUKDAR: What is the basis?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: If the honourable member wants to know the quantities that have been allotted to this province, then I can read it out from my notes:

In reserved field—

		lbs.
Quinine Salts	...	28,951
Cinchona Febrifuge	...	17,283

In the unreserved field—

Quinine Salts	...	22,000 (for seven months).

Mr. NARESH NATH MOOKERJEE: May I know whether there has been any improvement in recent months during the last year in the total yield per acre? It is known that Government are experimenting and trying to increase the yield of quinine, but will the Hon'ble Minister please state if there have been improvements in the yield compared with the yields for instance in Java or Japan?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Yes, some improvements have no doubt been made.

Mr. NARESH NATH MOOKERJEE: To what extent?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I cannot say that offhand, but there is no comparison with Japan as yet.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Does not the Hon'ble Minister consider that an extension of acreage by 300 only per year is too small in view of the demand? It will then take 31 years to meet the deficit.

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Three hundred acres per year is our normal working plan, but we are soon going to launch upon a scheme which will take in 400 acres per year. That is more than what we can do with our present resources.

Dr. KASIRUDDIN TALUKDAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the basis of distribution of quinine and cinchona to the private druggists and district boards, etc.? Does it lie with the Government of Bengal or with the Government of India?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Everything lies in the hands of the Government of India and it is for the Government of Bengal to distribute it within the province?

Dr. KASIRUDDIN TALUKDAR: What is the basis of distribution within the province?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: It is the Public Health Department that takes account of the malaria quota of each district and apportions the distribution according to that basis. The quota is decided upon in each district at a meeting with the District Magistrate, the Health Officer of the District Board and the Civil Surgeon and distribution is made according to the decision of that meeting.

Dr. KASIRUDDIN TALUKDAR: Is any instruction given by the Government to help in that distribution?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: As I have already said, it is for the committee consisting of the Collector, Health Officer and the Civil Surgeon to allocate that quota, and no definite instruction is sent by Government.

Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state, in view of the fact that the total production of the province is 50,000 lbs. and the total consumption is 90,000 lbs., how the deficit of 40,000 lbs. is expected to be met?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: The fact is that the whole production of this province and the production of Madras are pooled together and the reserve held by the Centre is added, and the Centre allocates amongst the different provinces, and the provinces distribute it within their respective provinces. It is actually the business of the Centre to give each province about 75 per cent. of their past consumption.

Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: The basis of consumption has been considerably reduced during the last year. Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is 75 per cent. of the reduced quantity or 75 per cent. of the original quantity as it used to be before 1940-41?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: This 90,000 lbs. has been calculated on the basis of three years' consumption and the Government of India take it into account in making the allocation.

Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that there has been a great shortage of quinine in this province and Government have failed to supply to the dispensaries and to the market and as a result

of this shortage quinine is being sold at an exorbitant price. There is also the evidence that quinine is being sold at a very high cost and 75 per cent. of the consumption is being met from the Government of India. But this hardly explains the position. Will the Hon'ble Minister kindly make the position clear?

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: On a point of order, Sir, on which this question arises?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I could not follow the honourable member. May I know what is his question?

Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: I am sorry. I shall repeat it. The point is that the total quantity of quinine that is necessary for Bengal according to the statement made just now by the Hon'ble Minister is about 90,000 lbs. a year. But the total quantity of quinine produced by the Bengal factory is about 50,000 lbs. and the Hon'ble Minister was pleased to state that the Bengal production and Madras production are pooled together and the Government of India reserve of the 75 per cent. of the actual consumption is then added to it. How then is it that there is a great shortage of quinine in the Government dispensaries, local board and district board dispensaries and in the market, and how is it that whatever quinine is available is being sold at a very high cost and it is practically beyond the reach of men of moderate means? I want to know what steps are being taken by Government to meet that situation?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Of course my department is now only concerned with the production side of quinine and cinchona and allocation side has been transferred to the Public Health Department, and it is for that department to state how that situation can be met. It is no doubt a difficult matter, but so far as I understand I think it is beyond our capacity to meet the situation because our quota is fixed and our resources are limited. We shall have to carry on with this shortage so long as we cannot get a fresh quota.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, order. We have already passed more than one hour which is generally fixed for question time, and I would request the honourable members not to indulge in supplementary questions which can be avoided.

Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: Sir, what I was suggesting is that, are the Government of Bengal prepared to press the case of Bengal to the Government of India so that that quota of 75 per cent. might be increased to ease the situation here?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I think there is no possibility of increasing the quota of percentage of any one particular province. But if the honourable member wants I may place this suggestion before my colleagues.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Sir, in answer (*d*) it is said that "90,000 lbs. is our past consumption....." Is that figure an average of the last three years? When the shortage actually started?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: If my honourable friend wants that information I will give him.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Sir, the question of privilege that I wanted to raise is that it is the valued privilege of us to put questions to Hon'ble Ministers and when we get answers we put certain supplementary questions to find out whether Hon'ble Ministers are doing their duties properly. Certainly, Ministers are responsible to the House for their doings. But I am sorry to hear from the Hon'ble Minister to say that he knows his duties. Do you not think, Sir, it is a breach of privilege to be told by the Hon'ble Minister that he knows his duties without disclosing how he was discharging his duties? Have not the members of the Legislature any right to enquire how the Ministers are discharging their duties?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Mr. Deputy President, Sir, a complaint is made against me on the question of privilege. I never resented any criticism from His Majesty's Opposition nor do I feel upset by tremendous uproar. The Hon'ble Ministers are supposed to answer according to the Rules regarding questions which have been set out in the Council Procedure Rules and when an infraction is made, an Hon'ble Minister is to point out very respectfully to members of the Opposition that the Rules are being infringed.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: When a Minister does not answer a question that does not necessarily constitute a breach of privilege, but, Sir, we are entitled to know whether the Hon'ble Ministers are discharging their duties properly. After all they are responsible to the members of this House.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: My responsibility with reference to my duties is a responsibility which is known to me and my honourable friends should be perfectly entitled to challenge that sense of responsibility, but every living human being, whether he is a Minister or not, certainly ought to be aware of what constitutes a breach of privilege and an Hon'ble Minister being a member stands by his rights elementary rights of an individual to say that he knows his duties very well.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: I want a ruling from Mr. Deputy President on this point. By the way the Hon'ble Minister answers his question I feel that he is shirking his duties.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: It does not require any ruling. If the House wants to discuss it as a question of privilege, it may do so. But before you decide on your line of action, I would request you to consider whether the statement made by the Hon'ble Minister requires any further discussion.

(The Hon'ble Minister was heard to say in a low voice "I know my duties".)

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: The Hon'ble Minister is still insisting that he knows his duties. Everybody thinks that one knows his duties. Everybody is entitled to say that he knows his duties. But what are we here for? We have a right to be satisfied that the Hon'ble Minister is doing his duty. We want to find out whether the Committee is discharging its duties properly, and with this object in view, we are putting such questions. But he need not simply tell us that he knows his duty and thus stop us putting further questions.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The next item is "Presentation of Excess Demands for 1940-41" by the Hon'ble the Finance Minister.

Excess Demands.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I beg to present to the Bengal Legislative Council the demands in respect of expenditure incurred in excess of grants and appropriations in 1940-41.

The voted grant was exceeded under two heads, namely:—

(*a*) Jails and Convict Settlements, and
(*b*) Interest-free Advances;

while the charged appropriation was exceeded under the three following heads:—

(1) Veterinary,
(2) Industries (Cinchona), and
(3) Stationery and Printing.

The reasons for the excess expenditure have been set forth fully in the memorandum which has been placed in the hands of honourable members.

Supplementary Estimate.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, under section 81 of the Government of India Act, I beg to present to the Bengal Legislative Council the Supplementary Estimate for the current year. The total amount covered by the estimate is 3 crores 22 lakhs and 27 thousand rupees. More than half of this total is outside the Revenue Account and comes under two heads, viz.: "Interest-free Advances" and "Loans and Advances". The demand under the former is a little over 79 lakhs. It includes an advance of 53 lakhs to the Directorate of Civil Supplies for the purchase of food grains and sugar and an advance of 15 lakhs to the Civil Transport Officer for the acquisition of motor vehicles for Civil Defence purposes. The demand under "Loans and Advances" is 96½ lakhs. This extra expenditure is due mainly to the distribution of agricultural loans on a large scale in areas devastated by the recent cyclone and flood.

Under the Service heads the biggest demand is 48¾ lakhs under "Famine". This is due to the organisation of large-scale relief measures in the cyclone-affected areas. Other large items are a demand of about 32 lakhs under

"Extraordinary Charges", 21½ lakhs under "Police", and 18 lakhs under "Agriculture". The increase under "Extraordinary Charges" is due partly to non-poolable Civil Defence expenditure undertaken by Government in regard to its own property or for its own employees, and partly to special emergency measures, such as the employment of additional war-time Police, the grant of separation allowances in non-family areas, the organization of Home Guards, and the setting-up of a Directorate of Civil Supplies

Out of the total increase of 21½ lakhs under "Police" over 13 lakhs are due to the grant of enhanced dearness allowance and of the Police Emergency Areas Bonus; the balance is accounted for by the expansion of the Civic Guard organization and the rise in the cost of clothing and other materials.

The increase of 18 lakhs under "Agriculture" is due to the purchase and distribution of seeds of various kinds of food crops in connection with the Grow More Food campaign.

The reasons for all the demands presented to the House have been set forth in the Explanatory Memorandum and will be gone into more fully by the Hon'ble Ministers concerned, as each demand is moved.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The House now stands adjourned till 2-15 p.m. tomorrow.

Adjournment.

The Council then adjourned till 2-15 p.m. on Friday, the 19th February, 1943.

Members absent.

The following members were absent from the meeting held on the 18th February, 1943:—

(1) Khan Bahadur Naziruddin Ahmad.
(2) Mr. Altaf Ali.
(3) Mr. Humayun Reza Chowdhury.
(4) Mr. Khorshed Alam Chowdhury.
(5) Mr. Narendra Chandra Datta.
(6) Mr. Mohamed Hossain.
(7) Alhadj Khan Bahadur Shaikh Muhammad Jan.
(8) Dr. Radha Kumud Mookerji.
(9) Dr. Kumud Sankar Ray.
(10) Mr. Amulyadhone Roy.
(11) Mr. Sachindra Narayan Sanyal.

BGP-43/4-56A-750

BENGAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DEBATES

First Session, 1943—No. 4.

THE COUNCIL met in the Legislative Chamber of the Legislative Building, Calcutta, on Friday, the 19th February, 1943, at 2-15 p.m., being the fourth day of the First Session of 1943, pursuant to section 62 (2) (a) of the Government of India Act, 1935.

Mr. Deputy President (Khan Bahadur ABDUL HAMID CHOWDHURY) was in the Chair.

Time of the Sitting of the Council.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: Sir, before the business of the day commences I desire to mention to you and through you to the honourable members of this House that the conference we had yesterday among the group-leaders decided that this House would sit today from 2-15 p.m. to 4-15 p.m. and this decision was unfortunately not communicated to the Deputy Speaker of the Assembly before he rose for the day. My information is that the Assembly has been timed to sit today from 3-45 p.m. What I propose, in the circumstances, is this that we go on today with our non-official Bills up till 3-30 p.m. and we will make amends for the loss of time by giving the members of the House an additional day for the remaining part of the non-official business. I think that will satisfy all parties: otherwise the members of the Assembly would be knocking at the door after 3-45 p.m. and it would be an unpleasant affair.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Do I understand that the additional non-official day would be fixed on a day other than Friday?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: Yes. An additional non-official day will be given on which the business pending from today will be taken up. I think this will satisfy the members of the House. If the Assembly sits at 3-45 p.m. today then the Council will sit till 3-30 p.m. and if the Assembly sits at 3-30 then the Council will sit till 3-15 p.m.

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: On a point of information, Sir. I gave notice of a special motion regarding the health of Mahatma Gandhi on the first day of the session. May I know what has happened to that motion?

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I am coming to that.

May I take it that the House is agreeable to the proposal of the Hon'ble the Leader of the House regarding the allotment of another non-official day for the completion of the business that would be left over today owing to the shortness of time due to the Lower House sitting today at 3-45 p.m.?

(The House agreed to the proposal.)

Mr. NARESH NATH MOOKERJEE: Will that extra day be fixed before the next Friday?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: Another extra non-official day will be fixed which will be other than a Friday. We shall arrange that day according to the convenience of the honourable members.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, I give notice on the floor of the House that at the current session of the Bengal Legislative Council, I shall move by way of amendment to the motion for reference to a Select Committee of the Agriculturists Loans (Bengal Amendment) Bill, 1940, by Mr. Nur Ahmed, M.L.C., that the Bill be re-circulated for the purpose of eliciting further opinion thereon by the 31st May, 1943.

I also give notice that at the ensuing session of the Bengal Legislative Council, I shall move by way of amendment to the motion for reference to a Select Committee of the Bengal Court of Wards (Amendment) Bill, 1940, by Mr. Nur Ahmed, M.L.C., that the Bill be recirculated for the purpose of eliciting further opinion thereon by the 31st May, 1943.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: As regards the point of information raised by Mr. Lalit Chandra Das, I am just now informed that the matter had been referred to the Home Department but no reply has yet been received about that special motion.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I may tell the House that I got the paper only yesterday. I may also inform the House that I have recorded in that file that Government would have no objection to the discussion of that special motion. So, that special motion may be discussed any day.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Is the Premier in a position to announce the time and date for the discussion of that motion?

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: As regards the fixing up of time, may I inform the House that the condition of health of Mahatma Gandhi is very critical today? Therefore, I think this special motion should be taken up immediately today so that this House may discharge its duty towards him properly.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: We have heard from the Leader of the House that we have got very short time at our disposal today otherwise I would be agreeable to take up this motion today. But if the House decides not to take up questions then this motion may be taken up now.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, in so far as this matter is concerned, we had a similar motion in the Lower House and it did not take very long to discuss the motion.

Mr. MESBAHUDDIN AHMED: But today is a non-official day.

DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Any business that will remain unfinished may be taken up next day. But I leave this matter to the decision of the House.

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: I crave the indulgence of the House and also on its permission to move this special motion now as it is of great and urgent importance and there is no time to lose.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Without taking up even the questions?

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: As you please. If it is however the pleasure of the House to take up this special motion after the questions are over, I shall have no objection.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: But in that case, I am afraid, no time will be left to take up this motion after finishing the questions.

However, I may just inform the House that the Assembly will sit at 3-45 p.m. and not at 3-15 p.m. so we may sit up to 3-30 p.m.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Industrial Survey Committee.

11. Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce, Labour and Industries Department be pleased to state when was the Industrial Survey Committee first formed in Bengal?

(*b*) Has the personnel of the Committee been changed, and if so, why?

(*c*) What has the Committee so far done?

(*d*) Has any interim report been submitted and has any action been taken on such report?

(*e*) What are its terms of reference?

(*f*) Why is the Committee taking such a long time in completing its work?

(*g*) How many meetings of the Committee were held since its establishment?

MINISTER in charge of the COMMERCE, LABOUR and INDUSTRIES DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) The Committee was first formed in November, 1938.

(*b*) On the reconstitution of the Committee in June, 1942, the personnel was changed in order to ensure a more complete representation of the sections of the community who are interested or have special knowledge of the subject.

(*c*) and (*d*) The Committee have so far submitted the following Reports:—

(*i*) Interim Report on the marketing of cottage industry products.

(*ii*) Ad Interim Report on the proposed fixation of a minimum price for sugarcane in Bengal.

(*iii*) Report on Industrial Finance (by the Industrial Finance Sub-Committee).

(*iv*) Report on the proposed Reorganisation of Unemployment Relief Scheme and Demonstration Parties (by the Technical and Industrial Education Sub-Committee).

(*v*) Report on Sugar Industry in Bengal (by the Sugar Industry Sub-Committee).

(*vi*) Report on the starting of a Cotton Spinning Mill in Bengal.

(*vii*) Report on electrical development (by the Electrical Enquiry Sub-Committee).

The reports are under the consideration of Government.

(*e*) Copies of resolution No. 10129-Ind., dated the 19th November, 1938, and No. 2173-Ind., dated the 10th June, 1942, stating the terms of reference are placed in the Library.

(*f*) The terms of reference of the Committee as originally constituted were very wide and on its reconstitution in June, 1942, they were further widened. This necessitated a comprehensive investigation of the present position and future possibilities of all categories of industries in Bengal and the main Committee has had to divide itself into a number of sub-committees to deal with specific industries or aspects of industries and to submit detailed reports for the consideration of the main Committee. These *inter alia* account for the prolongation of the work of the Committee.

(*g*) The main Committee has so far held 21 meetings and the sub-committees thereunder 65 meetings.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister kindly state if one of the Chairmen of the Committee was not formerly a Director-General of Commercial Intelligence and if he has not now been replaced by a Professor of Applied Chemistry?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, Dacca: That may be so, Sir.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether a Professor of Applied Chemistry is more fitted to deal with a matter of this nature than the Director-General of Commercial Intelligence.

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: I cannot say. I want notice.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: With reference to (*c*) and (*d*), it is stated that the reports are under the consideration of Government, and it appears that as many as 7 reports have been received by Government. Will the Hon'ble Minister kindly say if any of these reports has been finally considered by Government?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: The present position with regard to the reports referred to is noted below:—

(*i*) *Interim report on the marketing of cottage industry products.*—A scheme was duly formulated on the basis of the reports and approved by Government but it has been held in abeyance due to war.

(ii) and (v) *Interim report on the fixation of a minimum price for sugarcane in Bengal and report on sugar industry.*—These reports are dealt with in the Agriculture Department which is the administrative department in respect of the said scheme. Action on the reports has been pending consideration of the Provincial Sugar Board recommended by the Committee which is under consideration of Government.

(iii) *Report on Industrial Finance.*—The matter is under reference to the Director of Industries.

(iv) *Report on the Reorganisation of Unemployment Relief Scheme.*—A reorganisation scheme has been formulated by the Director of Industries in the light of the Committee's report and is now under examination in consultation with him.

(vi) *Report on the starting of a Cotton Spinning Mill in Bengal.*—The matter is under reference to the Director of Industries.

(vii) *Report on electrical development.*—The report was referred to Commerce Department for necessary action. That department has obtained recently an authoritative report on the possibility of electrical development for this province. The report is under consideration.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: With reference to sub-paragraphs (v) and (vi) of (c) and (d) of this question, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when the reports were made over to the Director of Industries and how long he has been dealing with them?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: I cannot say that off-hand, Sir; I want notice.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: With reference to (f), it appears that the terms of reference to this Committee have been further widened by a notification in 1942, but has the Hon'ble Minister considered the necessity of including in those terms of reference an examination of the possibility of those industries which have connection with the war condition in the country?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: I have taken note of the honourable member's suggestions and shall try to include them in the terms of reference.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: With reference to (b), it appears that certain changes in the personnel of the Committee have been made. Will the Hon'ble Minister give the names of those persons who have been removed and those persons who have been included in their places?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: I want notice.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: I submit that this is a legitimate supplementary question and in such cases the answers

are to be found in files, such as the names of those who were members and who have been now replaced. Accordingly this type of information should be given on the spot.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, order. I propose to pass over the remaining questions of today. I now call upon Mr. Lalit Chandra Das to move his Special Motion.

Special Motion regarding Mr. Gandhi's Fast.

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: Sir, I beg to move the following Special Motion:—

"That this Council has learnt with deep regret the news of Mahatma Gandhi's fast which had commenced on the 10th February last and which is due to last for three long weeks till the early morning of the 2nd March; regard being had to Mahatmaji's age and his present state of health, this Council requests the Government of Bengal to move the Government of India for his immediate and unconditional release."

I beg to submit that I submitted this motion on Friday last, the day on which the session opened, but it could not be taken up that day because we had to adjourn immediately on account of the ufortunate and untimely death of Sir Thomas Lamb.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Will you please send me a copy of the motion?

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: Yes. (Sends a copy to the Deputy President.)

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Sir, when the honourable member was moving his motion, he gave no information about it to us previously. Therefore I think it will be convenient if we take up this motion some time afterwards, while in the meantime we examine the terms, the wordings of the resolution, so that we may see whether we can support the motion. With this end in view, I would suggest that the House may be adjourned for five minutes to enable us to scrutinise the terms of the motion. We desire that it may be passed without any controversy.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: If that is the desire of the House, I have no objection to complying with this request.

(The House signified its assent.)

The House stands adjourned for five minutes.

(The House was accordingly adjourned for five minutes.)

(After adjournment.)

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: Mr. Deputy President, I have already read the special motion before the House. I do not think it requires many words from me in support of it. It is an undoubted fact that Mahatma Gandhi is the greatest man in the world. His condition, while he is fasting, is being watched with great anxiety throughout the world. He is the

living embodiment of truth and non-violence. His life is a direct protest against carnage that is now going on in the world war from one end of the globe to the other. I will not dilate on the manifold virtues of the Mahatma. To do so for a man like me would be impertinence. Sir, his life is very valuable and all the people of the world have become anxious to know what decision the Government of India are going to take so far as he is concerned. I have put my motion on grounds which should meet with acceptance from all parties. I have taken my stand on humanitarian grounds. I have said in my resolution—"regard being had of Mahatma Gandhi's age and his present state of health, this Council requests the Government of Bengal to move the Government of India for his immediate and unconditional release." His age is now 74 and all the noted doctors of India are beside him now. According to their report he has totally broken down and uræmia has set in: he can talk with great difficulty. So we are very, very anxious to get news of the Mahatma, and it is our duty to try everything possible to save his valuable life at this critical time. As I have said, in moving this motion I stand on humanitarian grounds and trust that the motion will be accepted by the House without any controversy.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Motion moved: That this Council has learnt with deep regret the news of Mahatma Gandhi's fast which had commenced on 10th February last and which is to last for three long weeks till the early morning of 2nd March.

Regard being had to Mahatmaji's age and his present state of health, this Council requests the Government to move the Government of India for his immediate and unconditional release.

Mr. KAMINI KUMAR DUTT: Mr. Deputy President, I rise in support of this resolution with a deep feeling of heart. The information available up to now conveying the report of the doctors attending upon Mahatmaji is very disquieting. Without any exaggeration it may be said that his life is an asset, and this resolution is nothing but a request to release him and to release him before it is too late, and to save the life of one of the greatest men of the world for the sake of humanity. It can be said without any fear of contradiction that the life of Mahatma Gandhi is a dedication for the very cause for which the present war is being fought throughout the whole world. The ideology which this present war aims at establishing in the world is the ideology which is being entertained by Mahatmaji throughout his whole life. So, without any consideration of politics, this resolution simply aims at securing his release for the sake of humanity, for the sake of the world. His life is really an asset to humanity at large. The whole world requires him, and I think it should be the effort of every one in India to save his life and to make the utmost effort for his release, and I again repeat that every effort should be made for his release before that life is lost to the world. The loss of this life to the world will be irreparable. It will be a loss to humanity. So, for the sake of humanity, for the sake of the world, Mahatmaji ought to be released before it is too late.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Sir, speaking on behalf of the Muslim League Party, I may add that nothing would have given us greater pleasure than to associate this party with the desire expressed in the resolution had it not been for the fact that Mahatma Gandhi's fast is one of the steps in his political struggle in support of his political demand with which the Muslim League is at variance on fundamental grounds for which we have been fighting for the last few years and had it also not been for the fact that we had not been able to induce Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress to accept the Muslim League point of view, namely, to place Muslim League in the future independent India, it would have been easy for us to lend our wholehearted support to this resolution.

Sir, it has been made clear here as elsewhere by spokesmen of the Muslim League that the League is not responsible for this situation that has arisen. Neither it has any hand in the detention of Mahatma Gandhi nor has it any power to secure his release. Therefore, in view of the political implications on one side with the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi and on the other with the British Government, we the Muslim Leaguers have no part to play in it. So, we in this party remain neutral however much we may sympathize on humanitarian grounds with the feeling that is paramount in the minds of most of our Hindu countrymen at large.

Khan Bahadur ATAUR RAHMAN: Sir, on behalf of the Progressive League Party in the Coalition Government (Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: That party is on paper!) I beg to associate myself with the feeling expressed by the mover of the resolution. Mahatma Gandhi is one of the greatest living men in India. Though we may not have the same political views as he has, we must at the same time admire him as a social and economic reformer in India. It is he who devised that *charka* and *charka* alone would bring independence of India. Had we followed his advice we would not have been faced with this shortage of cloth production today. Sir, I support the resolution moved by my friend.

Mr. J. B. ROSS: Mr. Deputy President, Sir, on behalf of the European Party, I regret that I feel it to be my duty to oppose this resolution. The fast undertaken by Mahatma Gandhi has been undertaken, as far as I can see it, for purely political motives, that is, to obtain his release. Now, he has also said that the fast is to be one of capacity and therefore although he has fixed it presumably at the limit of three weeks, it remains with him to call it off if he feels that his life is likely to be endangered, in other words, if he has overestimated his strength. While the death of Mahatma Gandhi would be an unparalleled tragedy to this country at the present time, we feel that the whole basis of ordered government would be completely nullified if a person who is incarcerated in the judgment of those who have the power to incarcerate him immediately resorts to a fast of this nature to have his sentence or his detention cancelled. The writ of the Legislature of this country, the writ of the High Courts and other courts of this country could not run if Government were to submit to what I feel I am describing fairly as blackmail. I repeat again, Sir, the remedy lies

with Mahatma Gandhi himself to call off this fast. I think, perhaps it might be a better gesture, if this House, instead of appealing to Government for his release, would face the facts and admit that it is futile to appeal to Government at present. The House should divert their appeal to Mahatma Gandhi to call his fast off in order that a valuable life may be preserved for the country. If the House does so, we will support a resolution on these lines.

Raja BHUPENDRA NARAYAN SINHA Bahadur, of Nashipur: Mr. Deputy President, Sir, on behalf of my party, I beg to associate myself with the resolution moved just now. It has been admitted not only in India but throughout the whole world that Mahatma Gandhi is one of the greatest men of the age. He has been recognised not only in India but also in other countries also as one of the men like Lord Buddha or Sri Chaitannya. Sir, from the humanitarian point of view it is the duty of all persons to see that his life be saved. In what form and in what way I do not like to dilate in detail, but it is the duty of the Government of the day and also of the people of this country to save his life at this juncture at any cost. If anything untoward happens it would be disastrous to the country and, as Mr. Ross has said, it would be a tragedy throughout the whole country and the irreparable loss which the country will suffer by it will never be recovered, and on that point of view it is highly desirable for the Government to see that his life be saved at any cost. Sir, a suggestion has been made by the last speaker that Mahatma Gandhi should be requested or rather persuaded to give up the fast, but I think, that persuasion has been tried for a long time by leaders of different sections but it did not succeed. Under the present circumstances I think that in whatever form it is possible to save his life we should adopt that method and principle. No question of prestige should come in.

Mr. KRISHNA CHANDRA ROY CHOWDHURY: Speaking for myself and as a representative of a large body of labouring classes whose welfare has always been a matter of great concern to Mr. Gandhi, though I am deeply concerned at the state of his present health, I would however still say that the motion before the House has rather been misconceived, for the saving of Mahatma Gandhi's life is not in the hands of this body or that body or of the Viceroy or of Mr. Amery, but it is exclusively in his own hands. Therefore, I would fervently appeal to Mahatma on behalf of the working classes who have been greatly benefited by Mahatma Gandhi by frequent intervention in labour strikes and advice to employers, to give up his fast, and retire temporarily from politics and try to solve the most urgent problem of the day, namely, the food problem, on purely humanitarian grounds, as millions of our people are on the verge of starvation due to profiteering and hoarding. Perhaps he is the only man who can help to solve our food problem and save millions of our poor people from starvation or even death by his active propaganda in co-operation with Government and various social, political and commercial organisations.

Rai Sahib JATINDRA MOHAN SEN: Sir, I had no desire to take part in this discussion after my leader had spoken on the subject, but I am

prompted to say a few words on an important aspect of this motion. Mahatma Gandhi stands as a most important figure at the present moment in the political horizon and that his death at the present juncture would be a tragedy has been admitted by almost all sections of this House, and such a tragedy would be equal to the tragedy which took place about two centuries ago. At that time it was never suggested to Jesus Christ that he should call off all his convictions in order to prolong his life, and therefore no question of requesting Mahatma Gandhi to call off his fast in order to spare himself can possibly arise in his case as well. He has dedicated his whole life to the emancipation and freedom of India and he alone knows better than any one else how that freedom can be attained for India. In that view of the case, Sir, my humble suggestion is that we should not ask him or request him to call off his fast. We can only ask the Government of India to release him unconditionally and if he is released unconditionally that will not amount to any confession of weakness on the part of the Government of India. Nor will it be advanced as a ground for other persons in detention or persons of a lesser type than Mahatma Gandhi to say that because Mahatma Gandhi had resorted to a fast and had been released unconditionally, they should also undertake a fast and should be released in consequence; such an argument would not hold water for a moment, Sir. So my submission to this House is that no comparison can be drawn between Mahatma Gandhi and an ordinary man, and therefore the question of requesting Mahatma Gandhi to call off his fast does not arise.

Then, Sir, with regard to the observation made by my friend Mr. Hamidul Huq Chowdhury of the Muslim League, of course I admire that he has admitted that individually speaking mentally they are associated with the term of the resolution; but they are prevented from doing so because there are political differences. I should have expected that political difference would not have stood in the way of their associating themselves with a matter like this. There are matters and there are occasions when political differences are to be waived and when all should join together hand in hand —political differences will remain always but there are occasions, and this is an occasion which will never arise in one's life and for generations, when all parties should join together and bear the burden and request the Government to spare the life of Mahatmaji—a life so valuable to India. All political differences may be obliterated on an occasion like this and we should all join together. With these words I wholeheartedly support the motion of my friend Mr. Lalit Chandra Das.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, in dealing with a similar special motion before the Lower House we made the position of the Ministers perfectly clear. In so far as Mr. Gandhi's fast is a protest against any policy formulated by the Government of India the Government of Bengal as a Provincial Government can have nothing to say. No Provincial Government under the Constitution can criticise any policy of the Central Government (Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURYH Qutstion!) or associate itself with any prayer for abrogation or modification of any policy of the Central Government. But the fact remains that Mr. Gandhi's fast has

thrown a gloom over the whole of India and it has been a matter of the deepest anxiety to all his countrymen. That anxiety and that concern we the Ministers fully share. We can therefore declare as human being and on humanitarian grounds that we associate ourselves with the prayer for his release. What we will do, or what we promised to do in the Lower House, is that we will forward for the consideration of the Governor-General in Council all the proceedings of this House, and we hope that the prayer contained in this resolution will receive his favourable consideration.

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: Sir, after what has fallen from the lips of the different speakers and particularly from the Hon'ble the Chief Minister, I should not add anything further except that I want to refer to one or two portions of Mr. Ross's speech. Rai Sahib Jatindra Mohan Sen has already replied to some points raised by Mr. Ross. I shall only refer to the word "blackmail" used by him and shall say that it is a hard word, and I protest against that. Perhaps Mr. Ross has forgotten that in the past Government had to face the question of Mahatma Gandhi's fast.

Mr. J. B. ROSS: On a point of information, Sir. If you refer to the official records of my speech of today you will find that I was not giving my own opinion, but said "what was called blackmail."

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: With respect to that word "blackmail," I do not like to say whether it was "called" or "so-called," but I simply say that on a previous occasion Government did take notice of Mahatma Gandhi's fast, and as a result of that he was set free and law and order did not suffer on that account. I may add further that had he been allowed to see the Viceroy prior to his arrest, such developments, such violent disturbances would never have taken place. Even if now he is set at liberty we would see what steps he would have taken.

Anyway, Sir, I am glad to see this unanimity of opinion regarding his unconditional and immediate release. He is not an ordinary man that he undertakes his fast only for his release. And certainly if he is released the whole administration would not come to a standstill. Can Mr. Ross cite a single instance where due to the fast of one man 150 leaders have met for the purpose of requesting the Government of India for his immediate and unconditional release? Such an instance will never be found by Mr. Ross.

As regards Mr. K. C. Roy Chowdhury's remarks that working classes have done nothing for Mahatmaji's release, I may tell him that several labour organizations of India, particularly from Bombay and elsewhere, have sent representations to the Government of India and passed resolutions for his immediate and unconditional release.

With these words I appeal to the House for accepting this special motion unanimously.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The question before the House is: that this Council has learnt with deep regret the news of Mahatma Gandhi's fast which had commenced on the 10th February last and which is to last for three long weeks till the early morning of the 2nd March.

Regard being had to Mahatmaji's age and his present state of health, this Council requests the Government of Bengal to move the Government of India for his immediate and unconditional release.

The motion was put and agreed to.

NON-OFFICIAL BILL.

The Bengal Agricultural Debtors (Amendment) Bill, 1940.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Now, I take up the consideration of Bills.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Mr. Deputy President, Sir, I beg to move that the Bill be referred to a Select Committee consisting of—

(1) The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Hashem Ali Khan, Minister in charge of the Co-operative Credit and Rural Indebtedness Department,
(2) Mr. Nur Ahmed,
(3) Khan Sahib Abul Quasem,
(4) Mr. Mesbahuddin Ahmed,
(5) Raja Bhupendra Narayan Sinha Bahadur, of Nashipur,
(6) Mr. Naresh Nath Mookerjee,
(7) Mr. W. B. G. Laidlaw,
(8) Mr. Dhirendra Lal Barua,
(9) Mr. Khorshed Alam Chowdhury,
(10) Khan Bahadur M. Shamsuzzoha, and
(11) the mover,

with instructions to submit their report by the 15th March, 1943, and that the number of members whose presence shall be necessary to constitute a quorum shall be four.

Sir, in moving this motion, I shall refer briefly to the main provisions of the Bill which I am proposing to be referred to the Select Committee. There are three main provisions. The Agricultural Debtors Act has been in operation for more than five years, but even now, I don't think, it has touched even the fringe of the agricultural debt problem. The agricultural debt of Bengal was estimated by the Banking Enquiry Committee some ten years ago at rupees 100 crore. Sir, I think, it has now come to about rupees 200 crores or something like that. But the Agricultural Debt Settlement Boards up till now have done little towards the settlement of this huge debt, though nearly 2 crores of rupees have been expended on account of the establishment charge of these Boards. Sir, they have not touched even the fringe of the problem. Sir, we may rest assured that even 20 per cent. of the agricultural debts referred to above have not been dealt with by the Debt Settlement Boards. If we really mean business and we really want to clear the agricultural debts of Bengal, we must have some drastic measures, just like those which have been adopted in certain European countries like Greece. Sir, we should not depend for amicable settlement of the agricultural debts on the caprice of the either party—the

debtor or the creditor. Nor should we expect that the agriculturists will come to the Debt Settlement Boards for settlement of their debts, but we should take up the entire problem in our own hands. Sir, by legislation we should compel all creditors of agricultural debts to come up before the Debt Settlement Boards and submit returns of the agriculturists' debts, due to them, just as in the case of Court of Wards where all the creditors are called upon to submit their lists of debts, due from the estate which comes under the Court of Wards. Similar provision should be made as soon as a Debt Settlement Board is established in an area. The creditors should be called upon by notice to file a statement of their dues to the Boards which the agriculturists will be owing to them. Sir, if this is done, the creditors will not be able to realise their dues at their own sweet will. Sir, unless we adopt some such measures, we will never be able to clear the debts of the agriculturists which was the real object of the Agricultural Debtors Act.

Sir, the next provision in my Bill is this. There is provision in the Act that only when 40 per cent. of the debt have been settled amicably, the rest of the debt can be settled on the same terms by the Debt Settlement Boards. Sir, it is very often seen that 40 per cent. of the debts are never amicably settled. If 40 per cent. of the debts are not settled amicably, what will happen then? I think, Sir, that some definite rules for settlement of debts should be issued by Government to the Debt Settlement Boards, whether the parties agree or not. Sir, if this is done, I think, the agricultural debts of Bengal will be wholly cleared.

The next provision in my Bill is that, instead of fixing the instalment according to which the debts are to be cleared on payment of cash money there should be a provision in the Act by which a portion of the land of the debtor should be made over to the creditor for a certain number of years for enjoyment towards the clearance of the debt. If this is done, then the debt will be automatically cleared off and the holding will not have to be put up to sale on default of payment according to instalments, by virtue of a certificate decree.

If these three provisions are resorted to, then and then only, can the agricultural debt problem of Bengal be solved, otherwise we shall only be playing with it. We have not even touched the fringe of the problem although vast sums have been spent as establishment charge. I doubt even if 20 crores of agricultural debt have so far been dealt with but even then actual settlement has not taken place even in respect of 5 crores. Where are we then now? Out of 200 crores of agricultural debt we have cleared only to the extent of 5 or 7 crores at an expenditure of one and a half or two crores because annually we are spending nearly about 26 lakhs on debt settlement boards and we have spent this amount, if not more, during the last six years. I therefore think that if we really want to see the agriculturists who are the real backbone of this country flourish and to wipe off their debts, then we should take stringent measures and make drastic changes in the Act so that their debts may be duly cleared off and we may not place before them only toys to play with and make-believes.

If the Bill is referred to a Select Committee then we may put our heads together and may be able to make amendments in it after considering various matters. This is only a draft Bill and the Hon'ble Minister may suggest any changes that he may think necessary. It might be said that agricultural debt settlement boards have seriously affected the agricultural credit, which has practically died out in the rural areas, but that should not stand in the way. We cannot afford to allow our agriculturists living in this way, being over head and ears in debt; their debts must be cleared off once for all, so that they may start with a clean slate, just as has been done in other countries. I know that in Greece the scaling down of debts has been far more drastic, the maximum amount of settlement being about 60 per cent. of the value of the debtor's property; that is, only 60 per cent. the value of the debtor's property is to be paid by annual instalments within the course of 15 years. That is how in Greece they have arranged for the whole of the agricultural debt to be cleared off and they have actually cleared off a large amount of agricultural debt in many other European countries on similar lines. Why should not we in Bengal adopt such a measure as this? If our Ministers are really interested in the welfare of the agriculturists of this country then they should take up the matter seriously and handle it properly and not merely play with the problem.

With these words I move my motion.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Motion moved: that the Bengal Agricultural Debtors (Amendment) Bill, 1940, be referred to a Select Committee consisting of—

(1) The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Hashem Ali Khan, Minister in charge of the Co-operative Credit and Rural Indebtedness Department,
(2) Mr. Nur Ahmed,
(3) Khan Sahib Abul Quasem,
(4) Mr. Mesbahuddin Ahmed,
(5) Raja Bhupendra Narayan Sinha Bahadur, of Nashipur,
(6) Mr. Naresh Nath Mookerjee,
(7) Mr. W. B. G. Laidlaw,
(8) Mr. Dhirendra Lal Barua,
(9) Mr. Khorshed Alam Chowdhury,
(10) Khan Bahadur M. Shamsuzzoha, and
(11) the mover,

with instructions to submit their report by the 15th March, 1943, and that the number of members whose presence shall be necessary to constitute a quorum shall be four.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Sir, I am sorry that I have to oppose this motion of my esteemed friend Khan Bahadur Saiyed Muazzamuddin Hosain. I know that his heart is always for the poor agriculturists and I know that he thinks just like a dreamer that the woes and miseries of the agriculturists could be removed by the

stroke of a pen. I find from the provisions of the Bill the exuberance of feelings that he entertains for the poorer mass of this province. But at the same time I regret that he lives in the land of dreams and he has not the practical ideas of the world. He wants that all the debts of the agricultural debtors of Bengal be liquidated in one year (Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: In 15 years.) all right in 12 or 15 years. But he forgets that he should also consider the credit problem for the sake of the agriculturists and cultivators themselves. There is already a hue and cry throughout the province on account of the enactment of this Act. The rural credit has come to a close altogether and it is difficult for a cultivator or agriculturist to get a loan from his neighbour or even from his brother, and the reason is ascribed to the enactment of the Bengal Agricultural Debtors Act. Already there is opposition and in the face of this, while we are trying to think out a solution of the problem, my friend wants to introduce a Bill which will cut at the root of the very idea of this Act. I have carefully gone through the different clauses of the Bill one after another and I am constrained to say that with the utmost effort to remove the debtors' misery I cannot accept any of the clauses of the Bill as suitable, fair and reasonable. As to clause 4, as I find it in the Bill, namely, "that with the establishment of a Debt Settlement Board by notification in any area, all proceedings in Civil Courts including execution and delivery of possession, in connection with agricultural debts or agricultural rents of that area shall be stayed on either party's merely informing the Court, by a written petition that it is a case of agricultural debt or arrear rent of an agriculturist. But if no stay order is subsequently received from any board within three years the Civil Court proceedings shall be restarted on the application of either of the parties". So it will be seen that on the submission of a mere petition before any civil or revenue court that it is a case of agricultural debt or arrear rent of an agriculturist, the proceedings could be stayed for a long term of three years. Now, Sir, without ascertaining whether actually the person concerned is a debtor or not or whether he is an agriculturist or not the Court will have to stay the proceedings on a petition without any stamp or without any court-fee, for three years. And what is the result? Any man, any party in a rent suit, any debtor or any *raiyat* would come up before a civil court and file a petition which will cost him nothing, because no court-fee stamp is necessary——

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, order, the House stands adjourned till 1-30 p.m. on Monday, the 22nd February, 1943.

Adjournment.

The Council then adjourned till 1-30 p.m. on Monday, the 22nd February, 1943.

Members absent.

The following members were absent from the meeting held on the 19th February, 1943:—

(1) Khan Bahadur Naziruddin Ahmad.

(2) Mr. Altaf Ali.

(3) Mr. Khörshed Alam Chowdhury.

(4) Khan Bahadur Rezzaqul Haider Chowdhury.

(5) Mr. Narendra Chandra Datta.

(6) Khan Bahadur Alhadj Khwaja Muhammad Esmail.

(7) Mr. Mohammed Hossain.

(8) Alhaj Khan Bahadur Shaikh Muhammad Jan.

(9) Mr. Humayun Kabir.

(10) Mr. J. McFarlane.

(11) Dr. Radha Kumud Mookerji.

(12) Mr. T. B. Nimmo.

(13) Dr. Kumud Sankar Ray.

BGP-4314-57A-750

BENGAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DEBATES

First Session, 1943—No. 5.

THE COUNCIL met in the Legislative Chamber of the Legislative Building, Calcutta, on Monday, the 22nd February, 1943, at 1-30 p.m., being the fifth day of the First Session of 1943, pursuant to section 62(2)(a) of the Government of India Act, 1935.

Mr. Deputy President (Khan Bahadur ABDUL HAMID CHOWDHURY) was in the Chair.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Wages of labourers.

12. Mr. LATAFAT HOSSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of he Commerce and Labour Department be pleased to state—

(a) at what rates the prices of rice, wheat and cloth have increased within the last 12 months;

(b) at what rate increase in wages has been allowed to (i) the wage-earners in the mills of the industrial areas, and (ii) the agricultural labourers in the rural areas of Bengal;

(c) what was the normal monthly rate of wages of an ordinary mill-hand in 1940-41 and what is it now; and

(d) what was the normal daily rate of an agricultural labourer of Bengal in 1940-41 and what is it now?

MINISTER in charge of the COMMERCE, LABOUR and INDUSTRIES DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (a) The precentage increase in the price of rice during the last 12 months is approximately 114·6; that of wheat (average of *atta* and flour) is 269·2; that of cloth (Standard coarse) is 104·5.

(b) (i) The rate of increase is not uniform but increases have been allowed in engineering firms roughly by 26 per cent. in basic wages. In the jute mills 10 per cent. increase in basic wages was granted in November, 1939, and the present rate of amenity allowance is Rs.1-4 per week, and supply of foodstuff at Government controlled price is also made.

(ii) I have no information.

(c) The question is vague. Rates of wages vary from industry to industry. If by "normal" rate average rate is meant this can be collected by special enquiry as information is not readily available.

(d) I have no information.

Industrial Survey Committee.

13. Begum HAMIDA MOMIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce, Labour and Industries Department be pleased to state—

(a) when the Bengal Industrial Survey Committee was first formed;

(*b*) what were the terms of reference to the Committee;
(*c*) when and why was the personnel of this Committee changed;
(*d*) whether any interim report has been submitted by the Committee; if so, when;
(*e*) if the interim report has been considered by Government and any decision taken thereon; and
(*f*) when is the Committee due to submit its final report?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: (*a*) to (*e*) The honourable member is referred to the reply to Council question No. 11 by Khan Bahadur Saiyed Muazzamuddin Hosain.

(*f*) The Committee have been advised to complete the work already done by the end of the current financial year and to submit their final report with as little delay as possible thereafter.

Settlement of Khasmahal lands in Municipal area.

14. Raja BHUPENDRA NARAYAN SINHA Bahadur, of Nashipur: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) if a Khasmahal Officer can demand a *selami* for each settlement with a sub-tenant made by a tenant of a temporarily settled jote within the municipal area;
(*b*) if so, under what Act he is empowered to do so;
(*c*) if not, whether the Hon'ble Minister will be pleased to issue circulars to all District and Subdivisional Officers to that effect; and
(*d*) if a copy of the said circular will be placed on the Table?

MINISTER in charge of the REVENUE and JUDICIAL DEPARTMENTS (the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee): (*a*) and (*b*) Yes, in the case of a non-agricultural tenant according to the terms of the lease a standard form of which has been given in Appendix IV, page 107 of the Crown Estate Manual, 1932.

(*c*) and (*d*) Do not arise.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister kindly state if the Government management of Khasmahals is not considered to show the model for zemindari management of the estates?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: The answer is in the affirmative. But sometimes models are not artistic.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to let me know whether it is not a fact that even in zemindari estates or in settlement with under-tenants *selami* is not called for by the zemindars.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I do not agree that it is never called for. Sometimes it is not.

Prayer house at Alipore Judge's Court.

15. **Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Judicial Department be pleased to state—

(a) whether any application was received by the Government from the lawyers and litigant public of the Alipore Judge's Court for a prayer house in the Judge's Court compound, and if so, when;

(b) whether the District Judge has forwarded the application with his recommendations;

(c) why no orders have yet been passed on the application; and

(d) when the orders may be expected?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: (a) Yes; 29th August, 1940.

(b) Yes.

(c) and (d) The question is under consideration of Government. An important question of principle is involved and owing to the many urgent and important problems with which Government has to deal in the present emergency it has not been possible to reach a final decision in the matter. It will be decided as early as practicable.

(Khan Sahib Abul Quasem rose to put a supplementary question whereupon the Hon'ble Minister made the following statement.)

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: The answer which has been given is clearly a stereotyped answer. But this is a matter with which I have the utmost sympathy. You may have a recollection, Sir, that the question arose before this House with regard to the adjournment for prayers for Muslim lawyers and Muslim litigants in the Hon'ble High Court and that question was settled by me in a conference of all parties concerned. I approached the Hon'ble Judges, the leaders of the two sections of the Bar as well as the solicitors. It is a similar matter and in this regard I am asking for the co-operation of my honourable friend the leader of the Opposition. If you look at answer (a), you will find that the representation was received on the 29th August, 1940. The question is a somewhat difficult one. You may have a recollection, Sir, that all the records were not available to me. Some of these records had to be taken out of Calcutta. I brought back the records relevant to this case recently, and I discussed one paragraph in the representation made by the petitioners before Government. It is one which I cannot agree. It is this. The paragraph in question is in the following words:—

"We also solemnly assure your honour that we shall give up claims to the building when it is required by Government for their purpose."

My knowledge of Anglo-Muslim Law is somewhat limited, but as I know the law, the position is this, either a building is dedicated to Almighty God or it is not dedicated to Almighty God, further question of reversion at Government cost is not permitted according to Muslim Law. That is a

point to which I draw your attention, Sir. So far as this matter is concerned, I propose to go down to the Alipore Civil Court and in consultation with the various officers there I hope we shall come to a solution accepted to all sections. So, I hope, Sir, that no supplementary question will be asked. As it is a matter of some delicate negotiation with all sections of the House, I hope my honourable friend the leader of the Opposition will allow me time for the same.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: I hope that it will be done before the session is closed.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I shall certainly do my best.

Bengal Money Lenders Act.

16. Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Judicial Department be pleased to state whether the Bengal Money Lenders Act has been given effect to, and if so, from which date?

(*b*) How many licences have so far been granted to the money-lenders under this Act?

(*c*) What steps have been taken or are proposed to be taken to prevent money-lending without licence?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: (*a*) Yes, from 1st November, 1940.

(*b*) 4,160 up to January, 1943, but some returns for November and December, 1942, and January, 1943, have not yet been received.

(*c*) District Officers have instructions to prevent unlicensed money-lending as far as practicable. Government have examined the question of giving them special staff for this purpose but action has been stayed in view of the state of emergency prevailing in the Province.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Have the Sub-Registrars been instructed to see that no unlicensed money-lender lends money by a document?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I have not got that information but if the honourable member desires to have that information it will be made available to him

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: I hope the Hon'ble Minister will take note of this question for if such instructions are sent out they will prevent to a great extent unlicensed men transacting money-lending business.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I shall certainly take note of this question and shall deal with the matter in the proper manner.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Lest my question should not have been intelligible to the Hon'ble Minister, I may repeat the question once more. My question was whether Sub-Registrars have been instructed to see that all documents dealing with money-lending transactions are registered before them unless the creditor is found to be a licensed money-lender. Has any such instruction been sent out to the Sub-Registrars? That was my question, Sir.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: My answer is the same. So far as this information is concerned, the papers with me do not disclose the answer to this question but if the honourable member desires to have an answer I shall certainly see that this information is made available to him. I am taking a note of it and it will receive my due attention.

Co-operative movement amongst women.

77. Mr. NUR AHMED: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Co-operative Credit and Rural Indebtedness Department be pleased to state whether any special measures have been adopted in Bengal to spread the co-operative movement amongst the women of Bengal? If so, what are they?

(*b*) How many women's co-operative thrift societies and other institutions have been formed in Bengal up to date? Where and how are they working?

(*c*) Has any inspectress or sub-inspectress been appointed in Bengal to organise thrift or other societies amongst the women of Bengal? If not, why not?

(*d*) Do the Government propose to take necessary steps to spread the co-operative movement amongst the women of Bengal? If not, why not?

MINISTER in charge of the CO-OPERATIVE CREDIT and RURAL INDEBTEDNESS and AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENTS (the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Hashem Ali Khan): (*a*) No.

(*b*) There are no thrift societies exclusively composed of women. There are 10 Mahilla Samitis, viz., two in Calcutta, four in the 24-Parganas and one each in Midnapore, Rangpur, Pabna and Dacca. These Samitis spread education among females, train *dais* and arrange vocational training, such as spinning, weaving and needle-work, for their members. There are also two Industrial (weaving) Societies exclusively for women—a Women's Home in Calcutta and the Islamia Ideal Home at Chittagong. Supported by Government grants, these institutions are doing good work by training destitute *bhadralog* women in weaving and allied arts.

(*c*) No. No one has pressed the matter on Government's notice.

(*d*) Yes, as far as conditions permit.

Mr. NUR AHMED: Arising out of the answer to (*d*), will the Hon'ble Minister please state in brief outline the steps that he has taken to spread the co-operative movement among the women in Bengal?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: There are difficulties in the way, Sir, and I should like to point them out. First, there is this difficulty that we have got no trained women capable of taking charge of the co-operative movement in this province. Secondly, our womenfolk are generally extremely conservative and therefore it is very difficult to interest them in the co-operative movement. However, we shall see that trained women are available who can go amongst our womenfolk and induce them to become members and form societies

Co-operative Banks, etc.

18. Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Co-operative Credit and Rural Indebtedness Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) what is the total capital of (*i*) the Co-operative Central Banks, (*ii*) the Co-operative Societies, and (*iii*) the Provincial Bank in Bengal;

(*b*) what is the overdue principal and interest of (*i*) the Co-operative Central Banks, (*ii*) the Co-operative Societies, and (*iii*) the Provincial Bank;

(*c*) how many of the Co-operative Central Banks and Societies are in moribund condition and what is their total amount of bad debt and what is their aggregate capital;

(*d*) what has happened to the proposed debenture scheme for rehabilitating the banks and societies in the moribund condition;

(*e*) what the Government have done or proposed to do for rehabilitating the Co-operative Societies;

(*f*) what amount of bad debts has been settled amicably and award given by Special Debt Settlement Boards;

(*g*) how long it will take to settle all such debts; and

(*h*) whether attempts are being made even now to realise arrear interest from members of the rural societies?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: (*a*) (*i*) Rs.541·13 lakhs, (*ii*) Rs.585·28 lakhs, and (*iii*) Rs.268·52 lakhs.

(*b*) (*i*) The figures are not immediately available.

(*ii*) Overdue principal is Rs.328·45 lakhs. The figure of overdue interest is not immediately available.

(*iii*) Overdue principal is Rs.72 lakhs. Overdue interest is Rs.33·55 lakhs.

The other figures would take time and much trouble to collect.

(*c*) It is not possible to supply the information.

(*d*) A revised scheme known as "Rehabilitation Scheme" is under my consideration.

(*e*) Two hundred and six Special Co-operative Debt Settlement Boards have been established for settlement of old debts, according to the repaying

capacity of the members, to be recovered in easy instalments spread over a number of years ordinarily not exceeding 15. The establishment of more such Boards is under consideration. Government is also supplying finance to Co-operative Societies for meeting the seasonal requirements of the members.

(*f*) Bad debts are debts not possible to be settled or recovered. Old debts amounting to Rs.73·58 lakhs have been settled and awards given in 1940-41 and 1941-42.

(*g*) It is difficult to say.

(*h*) Only where the paying capacity of a member admits.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: With reference to answer (*b*), namely, figures are not immediately available—will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the figures cannot be made available from the figures collected for the purpose of annual report?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: No. The figures which we have got in the annual report do not contain these items. So I am trying to find out whether the figures could be separately collected or not.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: With reference to (*c*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it was not proper to end this moribund condition of the central and co-operative banks by starting a rehabilitation scheme?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Moribund is a relative term. In some's estimate it may be moribund but in other's estimate it may not be so. Some banks are in financial difficulties and we are taking their case into consideration.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how many of the banks are going to be liquidated unless they are rehabilitated?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: The scheme, as far as I believe, will be out by the middle of March; so I do not think any of the banks will be liquidated.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: With reference to (*d*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how long it will take to settle the existing condition of the banks and how long will it take to give effect to the policy of rehabilitating the banks and societies in the moribund condition—without any policy of drift?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: We have extended the term of the Bengal Agricultural Debtors Act for two years more and I hope that all the debts will be settled within that time.

Sugar Inquiry Sub-Committee.

19. Mr. BIRENDRA KISHORE ROY CHOWDHURY: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) if the Government of Bengal has accepted the recommendations contained in Volume I of the Report of the Sugar Inquiry Sub-Committee on sugar industry in Bengal of the Bengal Industrial Survey Committee, regarding (*i*) the constitution of a Provincial Sugar Board, (*ii*) the functions of the Board, and (*iii*) secretarial technical staff for the Board; and

(*b*) if so, when he proposes to give effect to the recommendations?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: The question of the constitution of a Provincial Sugar Board on the lines of the recommendation of the Sugar Inquiry Sub-Committee of the Bengal Industrial Survey Committee is under consideration.

Disafforestations of reserve forest in Chittagong.

20. Mr. NUR AHMED: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Forest and Excise Department be pleased to state if it is a fact that the committee appointed by the Government to consider the question of the disafforestations of a part of the reserved forest in the district of Chittagong for colonisation purpose on a co-operative basis has submitted its final report?

(*b*) Is it a fact that the committee appointed by the Government in the Forest and Excise Department to go into the question of utilisation of waste land for grazing and cultivation purposes, so far as the district of Chittagong is concerned, has also submitted its final report?

(*c*) If so, do the Government propose to publish the reports of these committees soon? If not, why not?

(*d*) Have the Government taken any step to give effect to the findings of these two committees? If so, what are they? If not, why not?

(*e*) Have any lands from the reserve forest in Chittagong been disafforested up to this date?

(*f*) If so, what is the area of such disafforested land, and where do they lie and what use have they now been put to?

MINISTER in charge of the FOREST and EXCISE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Upendra Nath Barman): Certain information has been called for, on receipt of which I shall make a complete answer to the question.

Complaint against delay in receiving the Order Paper by members of the House.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Sir, before we proceed with the business of the House today, I may bring to your notice again that today also we have not got our Order Paper. I think most of

us have not got the Order Paper before us although there had been a Sunday intervening. Mr. Kamini Kumar Dutta and Mr. Barua said they have not got it and others also have not got it.

Another point is that today and tomorrow was set apart for the election of the President and the Speaker. We have got notice of that. Then again, election of Speaker and President was postponed to the 1st and 2nd March respectively and we were not told what would be the programme of business on those days. So, unless we are told how can we know what would be taken up today.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I am just informed that the Order Paper had been sent under Postal Certificate to all the honourable members. However, if the honourable members desire I shall look into the matter and make a detailed statement tomorrow on this subject.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: May I know, Sir, what is the business for today?

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Discussion of excess demands for 1940-41.

The Bengal Public Gambling (Amendment) Bill, 1940.

Mr. NUR AHMED: Sir, may I have your permission to move for extension of time for submission of the Select Committee report on Bengal Public Gambling (Amendment) Bill, 1940, to the 30th June, 1943?

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The question before the House is: that the time for submission of the Select Committee report of the Bengal Public Gambling (Amendment) Bill, 1940, be extended up to the 30th June, 1943.

The motion was put and agreed to.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Sir, I understand that this Select Committee was appointed in 1941 and we are now in 1943, and the Select Committee was only called once; after that perhaps every one forgot all about it. So, will the Hon'ble Minister in charge be pleased to tell us whether there will ever be any Select Committee on this Bill, or whether it is merely a paper transaction that we usually have in this House?

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I am sorry the Hon'ble Minister in charge of this Bill is not present here.

The Bengal State-Aid to Industries (Amendment) Bill, 1940.

Mr. NUR AHMED: Sir, I beg to move that the Bengal State-Aid to Industries (Amendment) Bill, 1940, be continued.

Sir, the reason for my motion for the revival of this Bill is that though the Government Bill on the same subject was sent to a Select Committee and its report was submitted to the House the Government did not think it worth their while to proceed with their Bill later on. The reason why I did not take steps so long to continue the Bill was that the Government wanted to enact a legislation on this line. But since the Government dropped the idea later on, I now want to revive my Bill.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The question before the House is: that the Bengal State-Aid to Industries (Amendment) Bill, 1940, be continued.

The motion was agreed to.

Discussion of Excess Demands for 1940-41.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Discussion of excess demands for 1940-41. will now be taken up.

Mr. NUR AHMED: With your permission, Sir, I wish to make a few remarks over the excess demands for 1940-41. Sir, with your permission I wish to say one thing today. We meet here today in an atmosphere of great anxiety and grave concern for a life,—the life of a great man that India has ever produced,—I mean Mahatma Gandhi. Today's news is that he is hovering over life and death and his life may end. So we all feel great anxiety and sympathy for this great man, and we wish God Almighty may spare his life. With this view I come to the subject. Sir, this excess expenditure whih has come before the House for regularisation was incurred in 1940-41. Sir, the year 1940-41 has gone and the year 1942-43 is also about to expire. Sir, this demand was not included in the supplementary grant even. Sir, it is a fundamental principle that no excess expenditure should be incurred over the budget grant. Sir, the law is very explicit on this point. Sir, the reason which has been given for the incurring of the expenditure is not sufficient in my humble opinion. Sir, under the head "Jails and Convict Settlements" a sum of Rs. 3,295 was incurred in excess. No reason has been practically given. It is said that this sum is a very small sum, it is less than 1 per cent. Sir, with all respect, may I ask, is it an explanation to say that because it is less than 1 per cent. excess may be incurred and no reason should be given for that? Sir, the excess under the head "Interest-free Advances" is a very large sum, it being Rs. 44,440. The reason by way of explanation was given that in anticipation that expenditure was incurred. Of course, the subject for which it was incurred was an important one, but why this was incurred? Sir, then it appears that under the head "Veterinary" a sum of Rs. 1,355 was incurred. The explanation given was that the excess was due to some unanticipated tours by the Veterinary Adviser towards the close of the year. Sir, why they were not anticipated? Sir, there is no explanation to the effect that those tours were for certain objects and those objects were very urgent. Sir, when there was no money for payment of tours, why the Veterinary Adviser did not postpone his tour for one or two months? Sir, there is another excess under the head "Industries—Cinchona". Sir, it is said that the excess under this head was due to adjustment of the cost of passage of a charged officer about which Government had no previous intimation. Sir, this is no ground for incurring an excess expenditure. Sir, they ought not to incur such expenditure and Government had no knowledge of it and have come to sanction it after as long a period as 2½ years. Sir, the principle involved in this case is that no expenditure should be incurred without the sanction of the Legislature but if incurred it should be put before the Houses in due time. But there was unnecessary delay and I hope that in future no such

expenditure should be incurred and if incurred at all in any unavoidable circumstances the matter should be brought before the notice of the Legislature without the least possible delay.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, all my life I have held somebody else's baby and this afternoon I have been called upon to hold somebody else's illegitimate baby! The excess over the grants and appropriation refers to the period between 1940 and 1941, that is to say, *functum temporis*, from 1st April, 1940, to 31st March, 1941, a period when I was not even born! My honourable friend has criticised four items in this excess over grants and appropriations. Firstly, he has asked why no demand for this sum was made before? Sir, the reason is quite simple. The appropriation of accounts took place and the Auditor-General's report came up to Government in May, 1942. Therefore, the question of the sanction of the excess over grants and appropriations comes before the House at the present moment and not earlier. Secondly, my honourable friend has objected to the expenditure of the sum of Rs. 3,295 in item "15—Jails and Convict Settlements". My honourable friend will at any rate be happy to hear that in two years this grant is gone. His next criticism is against item "24—Veterinary". My honourable friend asks "why was this excess unanticipated, and why is it that the Veterinary Officer undertook the tours towards the close of the year"? It is one of the greatest misfortunes in the world that there was a cattle epidemic that year and a cattle epidemic cannot be anticipated in proper time to avoid the criticisms of my honourable friend. The next objection that he has raised is about item "27—Industries—Cinchona", in which item there was a small excess of only Rs. 465. My friend is a great stickler of principle and therefore he has directed his criticism against this small sum of Rs. 465. This is how this excess expenditure arose, Sir. Mr. Calder, preparatory to retirement, went home and his passage money had to be paid for as the printed number in front of me indicates. This item was due to the adjustment of the cost of passage of a "charged" officer. At any rate Mr. Calder will not be here for my friend to cannonade him any more.

These are the four observations which my honourable friend has made and to which I have replied. This is not only a dead horse but even its carcase has spread its particles which might possibly swell the molecular theory.

So, instead of further justifying the steps taken by Government—and in this matter Government is a continuous institution—I hope the demand made on behalf of Government will find acceptance at the hands of the honourable members.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The House now stands adjourned till 1-30 p.m. tomorrow.

Adjournment.

The Council then adjourned till 1-30 p.m. on Tuesday, the 23rd February, 1943.

Members absent.

The following members were absent from the meeting held on the 22nd February, 1943:—

(1) Khan Bahadur Naziruddin Ahmad.
(2) Mr. Altaf Ali.
(3) Khan Bahadur Rezzaqul Haider Chowdhury.
(4) Mr. Narendra Chandra Datta.
(5) Mr. Mohamed Hossain.
(6) Alhadj Khan Bahadur Shaikh Muhammad Jan.
(7) Mr. Humayun Kabir.
(8) Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan.
(9) Mr. Naresh Nath Mookerjee.
(10) Khan Bahadur Mukhlesur Rahman
(11) Rai Sahib Jogendra Nath Ray.
(12) Mr. Nagendra Narayan Ray.
(13) Mr. Amulyadhone Roy.
(14) Rai Sahib Jatindra Mohan Sen.
(15) Sir Bijoy Prasad Singh Roy.
(16) Raja Bahadur Bhupendra Narayan Sinha, of Nashipur.

BGP-4314-729A-750.

BENGAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DEBATES

First Session, 1943—No. 6.

The COUNCIL met in the Legislative Chamber of the Legislative Building, Calcutta, on Tuesday, the 23rd February, 1943, at 1-30 p.m. being the 6th day of the First Session of 1943, pursuant to section 62 (2) (a) of the Government of India Act, 1935.

Mr. Deputy President (Khan Bahadur ABDUL HAMID CHOWDHURY) was in the Chair.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I understand the Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur of Dacca is ill and he will not be able to attend the Council today. So questions 21 to 23 will be passed over.

Fodder problem.

24. Mr. NUR AHMED: (a) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state with reference to his reply to part (g) of question No. 67 regarding waste land in Bengal put at the meeting of Bengal Legislative Council held on the 15th September, 1942, whether any committee has been appointed by the Government as yet to go into the whole question of fodder and grazing in this Province? If not, why not?

(b) Do the Government propose to take such steps as are deemed feasible to bring under cultivation the area of waste land capable of cultivation? If so, what are they? If not, why not?

(c) What is the percentage of waste land, forest and cultivable land respectively in Bengal?

MINISTER in charge of the REVENUE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee): (a) No. The matter is still under the consideration of Government.

(b) Two Committees were appointed by Government in the Forest and Excise Department to examine the questions of disafforesting a part of the reserved forest in the district of Chittagong for colonisation purposes on a co-operative basis and utilising waste lands of that district for grazing and cultivation. The Committees have submitted their reports which are now under the consideration of the Forest and Excise Department.

(c) Waste land—13 per cent. approximately.

Forest land—14 per cent. approximately.

Cultivable land—6 per cent. approximately.

Mr. NUR AHMED: Arising out of (a), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when the question of the appointment of a Committee will be finally decided by Government?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I think during the course of the next month. The matter does not rest with the Revenue Department but with the newly created Agricultural Department—not the old Agricultural Department.

Utilisation of honey.

25. Mr. NUR AHMED: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture and Industries Department be pleased to state if it is a fact that only 10 per cent. of honey available in Bengal is utilised and the rest is yearly wasted?

(*b*) Is it a fact that honey is a good substitute for food?

(*c*) Is it a fact that all possible efforts are being made in England and other countries to gather honey in all possible measures?

(*d*) What steps have been adopted by the Government of Bengal to educate and encourage people in collection of all the honey available in Bengal and to prevent yearly wastage?

(*e*) Do the Government of Bengal propose to take such measures as deemed feasible for cultivation of honey bees and for collecting honey? If not, why not?

MINISTER in charge of the AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRIES DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Hashem Ali Khan): (*a*) I have no accurate information.

(*b*) It is a good food.

(*c*) Yes.

(*d*) An officer of the Subordinate Agricultural Service, Class I, has been trained in bee-keeping at the Jeolikote Apiary, Nainital, United Provinces. He is preparing leaflets on the subject for distribution among the cultivators

(*e*) It is proposed to put this officer in the Horticultural Station in order that he may set up an apiary.

Mr. NUR AHMED: Arising out of reply to (*a*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he will try to make enquiries and see how much honey is wasted in Bengal?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: It is not possible to find out how much honey is wasted; but so far as I believe, a large amount is wasted and very little is being used.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister kindly state whether mere distribution of leaflets on the subject will be enough or some demonstration will be necessary?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I fully agree with my honourable learned friend that mere distribution of leaflets on the subject will not be sufficient. What I intend to do is to post an officer at the Agricultural School who will teach students there on the subject of bee-keeping, etc.

Non-receipt of Order Paper.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: As regards the complaint of the Leader of the Opposition made yesterday regarding non-receipt of Order Paper in time, I have got to inform the honourable members that I looked into the matter and I am satisfied that the notice to all the members had been posted on Friday last and if in spite of that it did not reach them that was not due to any laches on the part of the Council Department. However, I would request the honourable members to bring such thing to the notice of the Secretary if it recurs in future so that the Secretary might take prompt action.

Time for Debate on Food Question.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Sir, before you commence the business of the day, I would like to enquire whether the promise given by the Hon'ble the Leader of the House that two days will be allotted for the discussion of food and jute would be redeemed. Because many questions are connected with the budget discussion and if we get two more days on those two questions, we may leave out the detailed examination on those heads.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: That matter has been referred to Government but as yet we have not heard anything. I would like to know whether the Hon'ble the Leader of the House can enlighten the House on this matter.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: I intend to allot Saturday next as one of the days promised. The reason is that on Saturday next we have no business.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: But perhaps the Hon'ble the Leader of the House is aware that there was objection to sit on Saturdays at the leaders' conference.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: In that case, Sir, the date will have to be postponed for some time more. As the House wanted to fix an earlier date, I fixed Saturday next. But if the House do not like to sit on Saturday next, the date will be fixed later on.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: We have no objection if the date is fixed by the beginning of the next month. I simply want to know whether Government want to give us a day or two for the discussion of food and jute problems.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: I have given a promise which I wish to fulfil and as to the convenient date, of course it is difficult for me now to tell the House on what exact day we shall be able to proceed with the discussion of those two items, namely, food and jute.

Budget Discussion.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Now the general discussion of the budget may be taken up.

Mr. KAMINI KUMAR DUTTA: In ordinary case the Leader of the Opposition was to have initiated the debate on the discussion of the budget. But for personal reasons I have to leave Calcutta this evening. So I requested the Leader of the Opposition to give me opportunity of finshing my saying what I have got to say, and I also placed a request before the Deputy President to which he agreed.

Now, regarding the budget, what strikes one most is this that there is absolute unreality in the whole of the budget. There is no policy behind the budget at all. It seems it is a mere conglomeration of makeshift arrangements. But of course one thing may be said in favour of the Hon'ble Finance Minister that he is bearing the burden of heritage of his predecessors. It is not only the special feature of this budget but that has been the complaint in this House always that from the beginning of this Provincial Autonomy the budgets had been sadly lacking in any sort of all-round policy or in reality or in any view for the amelioration of the condition of the people. So the Hon'ble Finance Minister may put forward the plea that—"I am not treading a new ground. The old heritage is on my shoulder." But it is no excuse to the nation. Often in the budget the excuses are that we did not anticipate it, that the country is in a very unfavourable condition, in a very unnatural state of things. The war is at our doors and so the situation created by the exigencies of the war must make the budget not a natural one but an abnormal one. But the war is not being actually fought on the soil of India, there are countries in the soil of which the war is being fought and whatever glimpse we get as to the working of these nations that are actually engaged in this war we find that they have not forgotten this most important aspect of the war, that this war is not being fought for nothing. We even here in India, even here in Bengal talk very glibly of the new order of things. May I put one question to those who are pulling the reins of administration in this province? Are you preparing this country to welcome the new order of things? A new order of things will come after the war no doubt, but it will certainly come to those who deserve it, to those who befit themselves for receiving it. It will not come to slaves. So this is no excuse to say that because it is war and therefore our only business is to make makeshift arrangement for co-ordinating war efforts. War efforts are bound to be carried on. No one objects to that but at the same time the nation has to be built up. A new orientation has to be introduced. Those walking on the old paths should make it their prime duty to prepare the country for the new order of things which are bound to come after the war. Is this the budget which really shows any indication of that? It does not show in the least.

There are extraordinary expenses provided for in the budget. There must be extraordinary expenses. Nobody will object to that. But with that one finds that all the nation-building departments have been completely starved. There has been reduction in the grants on the head of "Education", on the head "Public Health", on the head "Industries" and on the head "Agriculture". One feels staggered. I found in respect of one item, namely, that of adult education, that some provision was made but it was

not "utilised". Why not utilised, Sir? It is these adults whom you have neglected who would have to face the New Order. Do these men not require any sort of education or preparation? Is it not a fact that even in a country like China which is in the throes of all the rigours of the war to its utmost extent, there is it not a fact that even education has not been neglected, and not only not neglected but that they have changed the old methods of education altogether? There has been born a new outlook altogether there with regard to education. If in China they can carry on the education problem, they can bring in some new orientation to their new policy in education and learn and imbibe all the lessons of the war, we too on our part should take our lessons from the effects of this war and also bring out a new orientation in the path of education in our province. If you will look at the budget you will find that no provision has been made for education—no real provision for spreading education,—but on the contrary there is non-utilisation of the grant already made by the Legislature!

If you look at the question of Public Health, you will find that it has been said that materials for sinking tube-wells are not available and therefore the Ministry is unable to provide for sufficient water-supply. Does the Hon'ble Finance Minister want to say that as long as the war lasts the people will not require any water in this country and water will not be required? We know, Sir, as a matter of fact provision is being made for water-supply elsewhere. I live in that part of Bengal which can be called the War Zone. I live in a frontier district of Bengal, and I have seen with my own eyes what sort of vast preparations has been made and is being made for the supply of water to those who expect to be engaged in the war, though they are not at present engaged in it. But as to the civil population who supplies the sinews of war no provision for water-supply need be made at all for them! And the excuse of the Ministry is that the materials are not available. Sir, materials can be made available and even if they are not available for tube-wells provision ought to be made for the supply of pure drinking water which is such a dire need to the people of Bengal by other means. It is simply shirking their responsibility to say that materials are not available. Then, again, we find that the Ministry also states that quinine is not available. Sir, although I live ordinarily in the town, I have touch with the rural area in my district, I have a house there and I have occasion also to travel in a considerable part of the rural areas in Eastern Bengal. I know that there was no malaria in Eastern Bengal; in my own town we did not know what malaria was but malaria is now causing havoc even in my own district and many of the districts of Eastern Bengal—parts which did not know what malaria was are now full of it. Therefore, what I am most afraid of is this that in the absence of quinine which is both a great curative and a preventive of malaria people would suffer more terribly. Formerly administration of a sufficient dose of quinine would make the patients free from its germs but now that they only get very insufficient doses of quinine they get well only for some time but relapse again and become potential factors of infecting others with malaria by spreading its germs to the rest of the country. It is a menace, it is an absolute menace, and living in Eastern Bengal I can say that we

think with dread of the time when people with sunken eyes and appearances in malaria-stricken districts of which I have some experience—we are thinking with horror of that future when people with sunken eyes will be stalking the land. Forsooth quinine is not available, but, Sir, why not available. Quinine can be produced in this country also. But why is no provision made for the production of quinine in this province?

The other day in reply to a question put by one of my friends here regarding quinine I heard the Hon'ble Minister in charge to say that it required 8 years to have quinine from the quinine plantation. I can say and I do say on the floor of this House, and I emphatically do say, that this is a wrong theory. There are two methods of production of quinine—one is known as Java method which produce large quantity of quinine from the seeds and it is produced by the British capitalists. But there is another method known as the Russian method. In the British method the plant is allowed to grow for 7 or 8 years and then the quinine is extracted. But in the Russian method the plant is cut after its growth and then fresh plant grows up again and the result of this method is that larger quantity can be obtained in a shorter time. I am not going to disclose the name, Sir, but I am connected with a party which made an offer to the Government to grant them land so that the manufacture of quinine could be carried on and sufficient quantity could be manufactured under the Russian system. But, Sir, I regret to say, and it is an actual fact, that Government refused to give that party land for the purpose. The party did not ask for any aid, did not ask for financial help, but only asked for some land to have the plantation of quinine according to Russian method, but it was refused. I may tell you that this want of quinine will create a havoc in the rural areas even in that part of Bengal which is known for its good health. We do not know what horrible future is waiting for us.

Now, Sir, looking through the Industries Budget—not to speak of big industries, I find that the provision which was made for the marketing of cottage industries, has not been utilised. It is certainly a neglect on the part of the Government. As to agriculture nothing absolutely was done. We are reaping the harvest which we have sown.

Then, Sir, the food problem is a critical problem in Bengal. Why is it so? It is because of the sins committed by those who were in charge of the reins of the administration. It was the result of their omissions and commissions. If there had been extensive project carried on, if there had been a real crop-planning scheme in the country the present situation would not have arisen. If really there had been a regular system of marketing of the cottage industries and their development, then we would not have been placed in this miserable condition. As it is, we cannot get the bare necessities of life which we require even at a fancy price. Moreover, Sir, there has been no growth of the smaller industries at all. The whole thing is nothing but a drift—there has been no policy—only a drifting policy. If there was any policy at all, I can say without any contradiction—it was only the policy of scrambling for jobs for the supporters and dependents of the Ministry.

No other policy was followed by the Ministry. We belonging to the Congress Party often heard when the question of jobs came that they would go to the proper person. We do not like that particular men from a particular community should come to fill the posts. We want that honest and competent men should get the jobs. But instead of that we find there is no policy for ameliorating the condition of the people and the people who are in charge of the administration are frittering away money for nothing. They are not supplying the necessities of the people of the country but they are supplying the needs of the dependants and supporters of Government. It may be said that many of the problems are linked up with the problem of the whole of India. I do not deny that, some of the problems are certainly linked up with the whole of India but supplies of ordinary essential necessities of life can be tackled by the Provincial Government. So, that excuse does not exonerate the Ministry from the guilt of that charge. We heard of total war, we talked of total war so long. We did not understand what total war was. We have just begun to understand it because our home-fronts are being attacked——

Absence of the Hon'ble the Finance Minister during Budget Discussion.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: On a point of order, Sir. Important budget discussions are going on. Members giving expression to their views on the budget do expect that the Minister concerned should be here to listen to their speeches so that proper replies may be given. I notice that the Hon'ble Finance Minister is not present here. This is treating the House with scant courtesy. I draw your particular attention to this because it affects the privileges of the House.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, order. The Hon'ble the Finance Minister was present here. He has left the Chamber with my permission to say his prayers. One of the Hon'ble Ministers is taking note of the speeches.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: Is he coming back?

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Yes, I believe so.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: All right, Sir.

Mr. KADER BAKSH: Is any Hon'ble Minister taking note of the speeches that are being delivered now?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, the Chief Minister was here and he has now gone to say his prayers. I am taking notes of the speeches. I have very long ears——

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: No; very long ears will not be necessary, normal ears will do.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I have been listening to the debates with religious attention and taking down profuse notes and even if the Hon'ble the Finance Minister does not turn up at all, I hope I shall be able to give replies to the criticisms levelled against the budget.

Mr. KAMINI KUMAR DUTTA: Sir, I was just saying that we have begun to feel what a total war means. If our homefronts collapse for want of food shortage, that is, if people do not get the requirements of their life, certainly war efforts will not be accelerated but they will be impeded very seriously. They will give rise to various problems. Law and order, for which extraordinary precaution is being taken, for which extraordinary charges have been provided for, will be impossible to maintain. Because hunger is an important factor in creating disorder among the people.

Is it not a fact, Sir, that the purchasing power of the people has not increased in the least? No doubt, a few insignificant military contractors have been getting pots of money and those labourers who work in the military zones also have been earning a little higher wages but even these wages are really not adequate in the present market value for purchasing even ordinary rice and *dal*. So far as we understand, I say subject to correction, I think I am right—in the United Kingdom they have taken care to see that without raising the wages, all the requirements of life can be met with the present wages of the country, because the raising of the wages is not always a solution of the problem. It may sometimes create a disturbance in the economic equilibrium of the country, but here in this country what do we find? Go to an area where there are military operations, the labourer there is earning one rupee per day. Then go to a rural area 30 miles away. There the labourer is earning three annas per day. But the value of the rice is certainly the same in that arear as in the military zone where extraordinary wages are given to the labourer in order to attract them even at the peril of bombs. No thought was given over the problem. What ought to be the policy followed? Even as to the wages, what ought to be the problem, to what extent really the purchasing power of the nation should be increased? No thought was given over the problem at all. In the budget, we find that there is great eulogy over the machinery which is operating to maintain the law and order, and indeed for oiling that machinery extraordinary charges have been also provided for. Nobody denies that it has necessity for it. But at the same time I say that there is no vestige of civil liberties, no vestige of the ordinary rights of the people of this country. Not only that, there are extraordinary Acts and legislation which have ousted the jurisdiction of courts and which have divested the people themselves of their rights of questioning whether they are proper laws. People are being arrested by the Defence of India Rules and tried under Ordinance No. 2 of 1942. I am not questioning those laws. Those cannot be questioned here. Those are not the Acts of this Government at all. The enactment of those laws did not lie with this Government, but the operation of those laws does lie exclusively with this Government alone. It is the operation of those laws which is greatly inequitable. It has really divested the people of any semblance of civil liberty. I would simply cite some illustrations as to the operation

of those laws. As to the Defence of India Rules, arrests are being made under rule 129 but one cannot be detained permanently unless rule 26 comes into operation. The point to be seriously considered is whether rule 26 can be brought into operation unless with the consent of the Provincial Government and Provincial Government alone. As to the Ordinance No. 2 of 1942, it is well-known that Special Magistrates have been created throughout the whole province, and they are vested with extraordinary powers of trial of awarding any sentence except death sentence. These Special Magistrates have been invested with the power of trying almost any and every case except those which involve the sentence of death. This is the law and must be obeyed; there is no question as to that. But as to the selection of those cases which should be tried by these Special Magistrates under Ordinance II of 1942 this is left to the discretion of the Provincial Government only. It is not the Imperial Government which will select the cases which will be tried by these Special Magistrates; it is the Provincial Government who is to make these selections. What are the classes of offences and what are the cases that are to be thus tried, and by whom—in this respect the Provincial Government has been given the power to delegate that authority to any other person and that authority has been delegated to the District Magistrate and Additional District Magistrate. Does the Provincial Government however ever care to scrutinise, ever care to enquire as to what are the classes of cases that are being given to the Special Magistrates for trial? And are those the cases which are contemplated to be tried by these Special Magistrates by Ordinance II of 1942? Sir, I am a lawyer and I say that if they are fully scrutinised and fully enquired into it will be found that ordinary cases which can never come under the operation of this Ordinance are transferred by the District Magistrates to these Special Magistrates for reasons not of war but for reasons which are personal alone. There are cases which if tried under the ordinary court and subject to the jurisdiction of the Hon'ble High Court would expose the vagaries and misdeeds of the local officers. These cases are transferred to the Special Magistrates because they know that there is no appeal from their order, there is no revision from their order, and the only fate that will await the persons thus tried will be a term of imprisonment in jail without any remedy open to them. Of course the Ordinance is not to be blamed for this. It is its operation which is so inequitably done that is at fault, but for this who is responsible? It is the Provincial Government that is responsible. If they say that they have delegated this power to the District Magistrates then can we not say that they ought to have done so with some sort of reservation laying down the principles as to the sorts of cases that should be thus transferred to these Special Magistrates, and if there has been any abuse of their powers is it not the business of the Government to scrutinise and revise and see that the power is not abused? Government ought to know what an extraordinary power has been vested in these Magistrates. A Magistrate with even a few years' experience can try offences of this kind except those which involve a sentence of death and up to two years it is not subject to appeal or revision by an order of the High Court. So, in this case also, namely, in the operation of this emergency law we find that there has been a lapse on the part of the Provincial Government,

though in the budget there is ample provision for oiling the machinery for carrying on the administration of Government. As I think that the Leader of the Opposition will make his statement on many of the topics covered by the budget I need not say very much more.

Now I come to a problem which is to us perhaps a more menacing one than the Japanese invasion itself and that is the problem of food supply and the ordinary supplies of the necessaries of life.

Japanese invasion may take place or may not take place. It may be impeded and they may not be able to come to India at all. But the food problem is at our door and it is threatening the whole province. I would simply appeal and request the honourable members of this House to look to the pages of the budget and see whether there is any policy as to the supply of food: there is talk of what is called the Directorate of Civil Supply as if this big word will fill our belly. Then, Sir, the Civil Supply Directorate has no co-ordination with the district administration—there is no co-operation. What is the use of having such a Directorate. Then, we have got a grievance against the selection of personnel in charge of that Directorate. The Government have got a little fancy that experts can only be had from among the white officers. Wherever such a question of expert arises a white man is brought. But I may say that if you go through the record you will find that a Bengalee officer has done far better than a European. What does a European know of the condition of our people—what does he know of the situation in the rural areas. But all the same we find that if such a problem is to be solved a white man is brought and here also we find that a white man has been found most competent and brought as head of the Directorate. I and my own party find no reason why there should be a white officer placed in charge of this department. I think an honest, competent and upright officer belonging to our soil could be obtained without any difficulty who would know our position and would have examined the whole situation in the true light personally and would not be guided by his office. Now, Sir, what has happened as regards the food-supply problem? We know from our own experience what the price control has led to. It has led to the growth of black market—it has led to the growth of profiteers: these people have taken advantage of this food control. I must say also that these profiteers have thrived by means of bribery and corruption. This state of things could not have been tolerated in any other country. If there had been real control, if the person in charge of control would be upright and honest, this would not have happened. The anti-social element ought to be suppressed with iron hand. I say they are anti-social, and the greed of anti-social element knows no bound. But how long they will prosper; if things go on in this way their doomsday is not very distant. Then, Sir, I find a sort of admission in the statement of the Hon'ble Minister that the policy of price control has not succeeded. It cannot succeed unless the problem of supply is adequately studied. Without the control of supply and consequently the control of price real equilibrium cannot be established and for that Government ought to have

compiled statistics of the production of food in all the districts of Bengal. They ought to have real figures and not to have the figures collected by chaukidars but they ought to have real, genuine figures.

If they can collect genuine figures then they would be in a position to have a clear view of the situation, then they would be in a position to know how much would be required for the military and how much would be required for the consumption of the civil population of the country. They may then lay down a clear policy of distribution—equitable distribution—of the food supplies. On a proper study of these statistics can only be found a real solution of the problem. Because shortage cannot be found out unless the whole thing is thoroughly scrutinised. And if after that it is found that shortage cannot be met, I would say that rationing ought to be introduced. Country would welcome this rationing system. The poorer people cannot depend on the mercy of the rich. The rich people can pay fancy price. Rationing would be far more welcome than the present state of things. That will be a real boon to the poorer people. If the Government study the whole situation scientifically and introduce a real system of planning of different crops, not only rice, but other crops as well—and I say this from my personal experience, in the rural areas rice is not the only food the poor people take, in my part of the district sometimes they take rice in the morning and some other kind of food in the evening, such as sweet potatoes and other things—they will be able to solve the shortage of food problem. They may change this stereotyped diet of rice and introduce some other food which may be as nourishing as rice. Some people say that due to stoppage of export of Burma rice this rice shortage has occurred. But if we compare what was the amount of export we would find that the margin is very small. On the other hand we are supplying rice to other countries like Ceylon, etc. Bengal's need should come first then the necessities of other countries. (Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: Charity begins at home!) I think there ought to be more co-ordination between the centre and the districts. There ought to be district committees and in those committees men of business, experts should be appointed. We know what kind of men are appointed in those committees—men who have no knowledge of the conditions prevailing in the districts, Rai Sahibs and Rai Bahadurs—whose only business is to pay *selam huzur*, who have not got the courage to say anything against the officials. Have a real committee consisting of persons who represent the people of the country, who know the problems of the country and not consisting of those *johukums*. There ought to be a powerful committee here at the centre consisting of powerful official and non-official men and there ought to be co-ordination between this committee and the district committees. Problems ought to be more thoroughly studied on scientific basis and statistics compiled—not this policy of drifting. As regards other necessaries of life, we have got an assurance that *dal*, kerosene and other articles will be supplied. Of course, those who are in Calcutta are getting coal, but we poor people in the mufassil have to fall back upon wood fuel. No coal is available in the rural areas at all. There is the problem of transport, wagons are not available, but one is apt to question how is Great Britain getting its food supply?

It gets food from outside. Transport is available across the seas but transport is not available here. Even the inland transport is not available in our country. There are some people who may be inclined to ask the question—is the problem so diffiult that it cannot be solved at all? In Calcutta, of course, I now see that the coal is available but we poor people living in the distant parts of the country and which is practically the war zone have no coal, and we have got to cut trees and use them as fuel. As to the supply of kerosene and other materials, people in Calcutta will not undertsand what a want of kerosene means in the rural areas. There is no electric lights there. I have been to my village house and I found people there taking their food before sunset. I asked my villagers why they were doing so, they replied that as they had no supply of kerosene oil they were taking their food before sunset because they cannot take their food in the dark. The system of distribution of kerosene there is also a very fine one. Even in mufassil towns, we find that ~~those~~ who are in charge of it get tins full of kerosene oil but people who are not in good grace and ordinary people get only half or ¼ pints of kerosene and with that they have to manage. So as to the supply of ordinary requirements of our life this policy of drifting would not do. Better policy should be initiated by Government and they must take the people into their confidence, and they must seek the co-operation of the political parties in this country. There is no political party in this country who will avoid any sort of co-operation with officials in this respect. But who asks for our co-operation? Co-operation must be sought for. They are managing things in their own way. The old bureaucratic mentality still prevails. Sir, we can only say that there must be a co-ordinated policy and a policy of taking the public into confidence and full co-operation of the best non-official elements in the country. Sir, there is a slogan "Grow More Food". But is it really to cater to the needs of the people? No, it is not. There is no sincerity at all in this slogan. To carry conviction to the people, you will have to convince them that more food is to be grown for the provision of the poorer classes.

It is said in the statement of the Hon'ble Finance Minister that the Civil Supply Directorate cannot operate efficiently now because of the want of trained officers, officers are to be trained, and forsooth we have got to live up till then in any way we can, and then only will the campaign begin. Sir, what are these officers, these highly paid officers, eating the salt of the country, doing? We know in the rural districts that many of these highly paid officers have no work really to do. They are sitting idle; besides people are not coming to the court. Business is not carried on there and it is mostly in suspense. Only urgent matters do sometimes come out to the law courts. There are your old trained officers; send at least half of them to the rural areas. Let them work in the rural areas. Let them go to the people and tell them to grow more food, more of this food or that, or this vegetable or that. It is not proper that these officers should be shifted to the centre only and live good lives in the district towns as District Magistrates. Let them feel the consequences of this universal want of supply which they cannot feel, being themselves in control of them. So this

excuse that Government have no trained officers is no excuse at all. I will not go further into this however. There is another problem, there is another question which is asked by the people of this country as to whether it is not a fact that the Government themselves by means of their agents are making purchases in the rural areas and it is this fact that has really raised the price of rice and such other commodities. Is it not a fact that their agents are making purchases in the rural markets? I know of something in this connection in the rural areas. When some such agents appeared to make purchases some people combined and gave them a good beating in the darkness of the night and ran away. But no complaint was lodged against these persons, and the purchasers received a good sacking. The Hon'ble Mr. Banerjee says that no complaint was lodged on behalf of these purchasers but that is so only because the agents would have to expose the persons for whom they were making these purchases, and so on. These purchases by these agents should also be stopped. These gentlemen go about under the garb of *beparis* and contractors but they make purchases for the Government. The Leader of the Opposition just now reminds me that a huge sum of Rs. 50 lakhs has been allotted to the Directorate of Civil Supplies which means that we shall be further deprived of goods and commodities worth that amount. That is also a problem which should be carefully considered, and this matter of food problem cannot brook any tinkering with any further, for the result will be disastrous to the country. This problem must be handled boldly and sincerely and honestly. Therefore I would say that in respect of this matter you should take the statistics of supply and when the figures are compiled then settle your plan and introduce the system of rationing, if necessary. Introduce the crop-planning system and send out the necessary propaganda to the countryside or change the stereotyped mode of our food and who can then say that out of this calamity better results may not be obtained?

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Mr. Deputy President, Sir, at the very outset I must say that the budget is most disappointing. Last year we were told that the budget was a war budget and also a nation-saving budget and that is why it did not contain any substantial provision for ameliorative measures or sufficient provision for the nation-building departments. But when we cornered the Hon'ble Finance Minister by saying that nations at war in Europe and other places had been increasing their output of agriculture and industry even at the war time by 200 or 300 per cent., he had to say in his reply that they also were going to intensify their activities regarding agriculture and industry of the country in spite of the difficulties of the war. But, Sir, what has been the result? He was pleased to say that the test of the pudding would be in the eating: and that not only we find the test in the eating but more than that. Unfortunately the Hon'ble Finance Minister is not before us but the present budget shows his policy. Although he is not present before us, this budget is not the work of two months and it cannot be said that because he resigned he had no hand in the shaping of this budget. I say, Sir, he was certainly

responsible for all the expenses incurred and the schemes financed during the last financial year, and I say that the entire Ministry worked in co-operation and co-ordination and they have a joint responsibility and it will not do for the present Finance Minister to say that he was not the same Minister who was in charge of Finance last year and could not say how this and that expenditure was incurred: it will not do to say that he is in charge only for a short time now and could not deal with the matter properly and so on: that will not do: they have a joint responsibility and they take all the responsibility. (The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: They have.) They used to say that our criticisms were directed against them although to a great extent they had no free hand in shaping the budget and that they had a legacy of the past. Every member of the House knows that I did not spare the budget policy of the last Ministry and that I was one of their worst critics—worse than the then Opposition. So it is not that I criticise for the sake of criticism but because I feel it sincerely that I criticise the work of the Ministry. Then, Sir, sometimes it is said that my criticism—at least once, I remember, it was said that my criticism is of a destructive nature rather than constructive. If, the present Ministry had consulted us in matters of common interest they would not have met with such criticisms and no blame would have attached to them. If they wanted to consult us in that case we would have been too glad to give all our suggestions and we could not have criticised the Ministry in the way we are doing now. We know, Sir, that last year during monsoon the Government party members were called to meet at Government cost to hold meetings, and when in that connection a question was asked by one of my colleagues the Hon'ble Minister in charge said in reply—"it is no use calling the Opposition because they could not help in our policy, so we called the members of our party only". So we find that it is their policy to have the entire responsibility: they do not want to consult the Opposition even on a subject on which there cannot be a difference of opinion even with the Opposition. The present budget, so far as we can see after going through it cursorily and examining it I am of opinion that the budget has not been examined by the Hon'ble Chief Minister who is also the Finance Minister now, because we know Mr. Fazlul Huq, the Hon'ble Chief Minister, and if he had seen the budget we could have found at least some items from which we could have traced his hand behind it—that he has touched the budget and he has applied his mind to some extent to it. But from the fact that there is no such touch and there is nothing in it to show that there is any concern or anxiety for the poor mass I doubt very much whether he has even turned over the pages of the budget. My own idea is that this budget was placed before him and he merely signed it. I knew him to be a man with feelings for the poor. I am almost confident he could not have signed the budget if he had gone through it.

Sir, the budget is most unimaginative and reveals no feeling and no anxiety for millions of the people whose condition has been very critical now. I think this year also the reply of the Hon'ble Minister will be that due to war condition a budget like this has been framed, but as I have said

even in war condition they could do a lot towards developing the industries and agriculture of the country. That would have been really rendering actual service to the war efforts. I am sorry to say in this respect they have done nothing. They have practically allowed a golden opportunity to go without any notice. This war condition has given us immense opportunities for developing our industries and agriculture by a planned system. There were hitherto large number of articles which used to be imported from foreign lands, those articles can be manufactured here in this country now. Government could very well take up in right earnest the manufacture of those articles. Only the other day I gave a suggestion regarding the hand-made paper. Government also admitted that this could be done here but they are not showing any anxiety or interest in this matter though that could be taken up and run at a profitable concern. I do not know why Government are not taking up hand-made manufacture of paper when we have got actual paper famine; the Government are doing nothing now and are waiting for the report that will be submitted to them by the Industrial Committee. But by the time the Committee submits its report these advantages which are purely due to war condition may disappear.

Now, I shall deal with some items of the budget specifically. I shall first take up the receipts side of the budget. The Hon'ble the Finance Minister has stated that the expenditure is more than the revenue receipts by about Rs. 150 lakhs and to make good at least a portion of it he has suggested an amendment of the Amusement Tax Act by increasing the charge for some amusements which will give an yield of Rs. 33 lakhs or so. We do not grudge it at all. We welcome it. What I suggest is that there are other items also which could be taxed and the prominent among them that comes to our mind is the tax on agricultural income. A tax on agriculture was decided upon to be imposed upon the wealthy agriculturists and landed proprietors having more than Rs. 2,000 annual income even during the time of the last Ministry, but we do not know why it has been shelved. Sir, this was the most opportune time for imposing this agricultural income-tax. Because, Sir, the solvent agriculturists who have got more than two thousand rupees annual net income are actually making very large profits because agricultural crops are now selling at two to three hundred per cent. of normal price. They could easily pay this agricultural income-tax without any grudge. But we do not understand why this has been shelved. This alone could give Government 30 lakhs of rupees. Then, Sir, they could also impose additional taxes on articles of luxury such as cigar, cigarettes, silken cloth and probably ghee. On articles such as these they could increase the sale tax. If this were done, then the rich men only who could afford to purchase those things would have to bear the burden of this tax. If they wanted to get rid of this burden, they could very well do so by refraining from using those articles of luxury. That would have been so much the better for the people of this country. But, Sir, no attention was paid to that. Sir, it is very unfortunate that the proceeds of the taxes which were imposed during the last Ministry on the definite understanding that they would be utilised for certain purposes are being diverted

to other purposes. Sir, we are getting the following receipts from the taxes imposed by the last Ministry:—

	Lakhs.
Receipts under the Bengal Finance Act ...	10
Receipts under the Bengal Finance (Sales Tax) Act, 1941 ...	60
Receipts under Motor Spirit Sales Taxation Act, 1941 ...	9
Receipts under Bengal Raw Jute Taxation Act, 1941	37

Sir, in respect of Bengal Finance (Sales Tax) Act, 1941, definite undertaking was given on the floor of this House by the Hon'ble Finance Minister that a substantial sum of money out of the results of this tax would be set apart for contribution to rural areas for purchase of cloths for the poorest classes. But, Sir, that promise has not been redeemed. The present Ministry will say that they are not going to redeem the promise given by the last Ministry. Sir, are they not bound to redeem the promise given by the last Ministry. Sir, are they not bound to redeem it especially in the present condition when the indigent people are practically living a life which no human being can live? These indigent people can hardly afford to purchase cloths for their women folk. Sir, there are thousands of poor women who are passing their days sitting within their house. They cannot even come out of their house in order to do paddy-husking. I know there are many cases like these. Even in such circumstances the present Ministry are not going to redeem the promise which had been given on the floor of this House at a time when there was not so much distress and the present Finance Minister is no one else than the Chief Minister of that time who had joint responsibility when that assurance was given to the House and so he must in all fairness and in all honesty redeem the promise, especially when it has become absolutely incumbent for Government to look after these poor people.

Sir, the mere supply of standard cloth will not meet the case of the indigent people. We have seen in the newspaper reports that this standard cloth at best will be priced at 40 per cent. less than the ordinary market value of cloth. But, Sir, how will these poor indigents who are incapable of earning any livelihood now a days be able to afford even this 60 per cent., especially as they are not even getting the alms and charities they used to get from the people who have now become hard hit and the charitably-disposed persons also are unable to help them as they used to do in ordinary times. Sir, the times are abnormal and Government must therefore come to their rescue, if they have kept their eyes open at all.

There is another tax—the Bengal Raw Jute Tax. We were definitely given to understand that the receipts from this tax would be entirely spent for the benefit of the jute-growers. But, Sir, has any scheme been drawn up as yet, has anything appeared in the budget to show that any portion of this amount has been allotted for the amelioration of the condition of the jute-growers or for improvement of the jute industry in the country?

Nothing of the sort has been done. I say that it is a breach of faith on the part of the Government and it will not do for the present Finance Minister to say that the promise was not given by him, because he was the Chief Minister of that time also as he is now. So he will not be able to get away by saying that he is not responsible for those statements. So much for the receipts, Sir.

I will now take up the expenditure side. Under the head "Salt" I find that only a sum of Rs. 10,000 has been allotted for manufacture of salt as a cottage industry in the Contai and Tamluk subdivisions of the Midnapore district. Sir, I do not understand why no such allotment has been made for the Chittagong Division where salt is also being actually manufactured to a certain extent on the indigenous methods by the people of that area. My friend Mr. Nur Ahmed has been pressing for this times without number but no attention is being paid to it. I think it was time that the Ministry had considered this problem of salt and salt manufacture in Bengal and should have taken care that in this respect Bengal was made self-supporting. Under the head "Registration" I find that there has been some increase in expenditure. I do not grudge this because it is definitely stated that this increase is due to the increase in the number of documents. So there has been an increase in the receipts also. But, Sir, one thing strikes me in this connection and it is this: What is the cause of this increase? It was clearly the duty of the Finance Minister to find out the cause of this increase. I looked up the Administration Report of the Registration Department and I find that this increase in the total number of registration is "mainly due to the rise in the number of sales and exchanges most of which are sales under section 26C of the Bengal Tenancy Act, *i.e.*, of occupancy holdings; increase under the head 'Sales and Exchanges' increased by 22·78 per cent. and the sales under the Bengal Tenancy Act increased by 26·02 per cent." That is to say the sales have increased annually by 25 per cent. Within the last five years the sales have doubled and more than doubled but Government is not paying attention to these sales and they do not care to investigate what these sales mean. A greater figure of income satisfies them and justifies them to incur more and more expenditure in the Registration Department but it was the clear duty of the Hon'ble Minister to find out the cause and apply a remedy; a large number of lands are passing out of the hands of occupancy raiyats and still Government is indifferent. Times out of number we have drawn the attention of the House as well as of the Hon'ble Minister that something should be done to pass legislation to restrain the passing of lands from agriculturists into the hands of non-agriculturists and even to prevent the accumulation of large quantities of land in the hands of individual agriculturist because it is but proper that land should be equitably distributed amongst all the agriculturists. That is what we want. We do not want that a rich cultivator should possess lands at the cost of the poor agriculturist, for that would give rise to a class of rich agriculturists who would let out their surplus lands to under-tenants and under-raiyats and so on, and these richer agriculturists would certainly be far worse than the present-day zamindars. No attention is being paid to it.

Then I find, Sir, from the General Administration budget that out of the grant of one lakh of rupees for communal amity Rs. 15,000 could not be spent. But it is not clear from the budget how the remaining Rs. 85,000 has been spent. We were told in this House several times that we would be taken into confidence and would be consulted as to how this amount of one lakh would be spent. But we were never consulted. We only know now that Rs. 15,000 has remained unspent out of Rs. 1 lakh which was set apart for communal amity.

Next, Sir, we find that under the Head "Police" a very large sum of money has been set apart on account of dearness allowance. I do not grudge it. Government take into account the difficulties of Government servants and grant them dearness allowance. But what have they done for the labourers in the mofussil areas? When the other day I put a question to the Minister in charge of Commerce and Labour as to what he had done with regard to the agricultural wage earners of the rural areas, his reply was that he was concerned with only industrial labour: he did not keep any information regarding the agricultural labourers: that is the position we are in. The present Ministry say that they are friend of agriculturists and labourers and at the same time they do not keep information even as to what is the present wage of an agricultural labourer in rural areas. Has it increased proportionately with the increase of price or has it not: or to what extent it has increased? Was it not the duty for the Minister in charge to know these and to consider what should be done to render them some help? I know they cannot possibly grant dearness allowance to the private employees; but what they can do is to find out some method of supplying them rice at a control price. But have not they raised their little finger to solve this problem—to come to the relief of the poor agricultural labourers. These poor agricultural labourers are dying for want of nutrition—for want of food. Starvation is not generally the immediate cause of death. But on account of starvation people are suffering from malaria and dysentery and as a result of that they are dying. There cannot be death from starvation unless one commits suicide: some sort of disease must set in as a result of starvation for a long time and then as a result of that disease death will occur. The Ministers are for looking after the news and requirements of the people of the country, but do they care to go into this question? At Kishoregunge we had a conference and there it was reported that on account of malaria as many as 50 per cent. of the population died. These people died on account of mal-nutrition, for want of food and medicine. The Ministry is only thinking of their own employees and granting them dearness allowance as if that will satisfy the people. I must say that they ought to tackle the question of giving relief to the poorer masses so that they may get rice at control-price. Richer people can carry on and help themselves. But the poorer people are helpless and they are hardest hit and the Ministers are supposed to take special interest in the poorer people and so they must see that they discharge their duty properly.

Sir, under the head "General Administration"—Grant No. 12, we find it has been stated that "there have been savings to the extent of Rs. 1,18,000 on account of postponement of special expenditure on rural

reconstruction". Sir, rural reconstruction is one of the matters which affects the rural economy of the country and the amount that was provided in the budget in the last financial year has not been spent. Similarly, under the head "Discretionery grants" owing to non-utilization of the enlarged grant to District Officers for rural reconstruction, Rs. 1,76,000 have been saved. Certainly, Sir, the Governor would not have fallen foul upon the Ministers if this amount were spent. I know the mentality of the District Officers, certainly they would not obstruct the improvement of rural reconstruction. I speak from personal experience.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: On a point of information, Sir. I could not catch the honourable member in his last sentence. Will he please repeat. I heard him to say that the District Officers were willing to spend the amount but the Ministers did not allow it.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: The Ministers did not allow this amount to be spent within the last financial year. They have allowed this amount to be lapsed. I do not think the officers would obstruct real village reconstruction work. I have made a direct challenge, and a direct charge. I have not made a dubious statement.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I did not try to say that. I only wanted to know what was the last observation of the honourable member, as I could not catch his last sentence.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: After working with the officers for 31 years I know the mentality of the officers. They have not the mentality to obstruct any village reconstruction work.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: That is all right.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: I find that Rs. 55,000 has been allotted for the recruitment of 22 Munsifs under "Grant No. 14". I know, Sir, work in the mofussil courts has considerably decreased. Therefore, I fail to understand why these additional 22 Munsifs are contemplated to be recruited.

Under the head "Education", I find that "special grants to certain educational institutions to enable them to pay their staff for the period during which such institutions remained closed at the instance of Government in order to minimize possible disturbances" to the tune of Rs. 1,71,000 have been made. I do not find any justification for this allotment. Schools and colleges were compulsorily closed even though the students were prepared to go on with their studies which they were not allowed to and now Government are paying for their ordinary expenses. I do not think that the students have been refunded their fees which they have paid for this period of compulsory closure of the colleges. Have the students been repaid their fees? If this has been done, I have not got very much to say. But if the students have not been refunded their fees, there is no justification for sanctioning the grant, unless it was only for placating certain classes of people.

Sir, under the head "Quinine—Free distribution of quinine" Rs. 6 lakhs have been put down this year. It is only 50 thousand rupees more than that of the previous year. But, in view of the considerable number of malarial incidence which has been working havoc in our country, this increase is not at all sufficient. I should think at least another one lakh of rupees should have been put down under this head.

Sir, under the head "Agriculture" a monstrous amount of Rs. 33,72,500 has been allotted this year also for jute restriction. Last year also I commented that at least 50 per cent. of this amount could be reduced. But no attention was paid, nor any explanation given, why such a heavy amount was necessary? Sir, I think, every one knows that jute restriction work goes on only for two or three months. It is in the months of December, January and utmost February. To retain a huge staff on account of this work for the whole year is a huge waste of public money. Can the gentlemen who are occupying the Treasury Benches say that a whole year is necessary for this work? Sir, I was an officer who used to deal with the records of rights and I know how long licensing work takes. It takes only three months to complete the work, namely, one month for preparation and issue of licences, one month for making the fields and one month extra for other miscellaneous work. This staff is also said to be employed on village reconstruction work. But we find that the money which was set apart for the village reconstruction has not been spent. So they are not actually doing any village reconstruction work. From the experience I have gained in my part of the country I find that they have been doing no work at all, and Government is allowing this huge waste in spite of the protest last year. Sir, the very large amount of Rs. 21,23,054 which has been put on job workers should certainly be reduced by at least Rs. 15 lakhs if not more. By retaining the job workers for three months instead of 12 months Government could easily save Rs. 15 lakhs. I definitely told this during my budget discussion last year, but no attention was paid to that. It is very unfortunate, Sir, that Government should waste and fritter away public money in such a way at this time. But they will have to answer for this some day or other.

As regards Agriculture, the only agricultural works done in connection with the "grow-more-food scheme" were the distribution of seeds to the extent of Rs. 18 lakhs. That is all, Sir, and that too was done in a very haphazard manner. We know how the seeds are distributed. People who do not want them have taken them as a sort of loan. There was no definite policy behind this distribution. If I were to do this job then I would do it in this way, Sir. I would first call for definite suggestions, I would for increasing output of food crops take a statement from each Circle Officer as to how many acres of land he had got waste which could without difficulty grow food crops within a definite time, and after taking these statistics I would have give him a certain sum of money and I would have held him responsible for seeing that the required quantity of food was grown in that area. If the required quantity was forthcoming I would probably excuse the grower half the price of the seeds advanced as a reward. If an excellent

crop was produced I would probably excuse the whole of the advance. I would proceed on that line, for that would act as an incentive and stimulus for more and more production. But adverting to the policy now pursued by Government, we do not know where we are and how the money is being really spent. This is a policy of drift which the Ministry is following and it bodes nothing but evil to this country.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Would you be able to conclude very soon, Khan Bahadur?

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: I would probably take another fifteen minutes, Sir. Then I come to the head "Industry". There I find a saving from the budget allotment of last year for non-utilisation of the provision for the establishment of a research and training institute in metal industry; non-utilisation of the provision for marketing of cottage industry products, and savings in the provision for the development of fisheries owing to the delay in giving effect to the scheme. Sir, I am surprised to see that such non-utilisation should go on even in a department like the Department of Industries where we insisted on planned industrial development and intensive industrial activity. We shudder to think that money granted for industrial development should lapse for non-utilisation and that too at this time! This shows that Government not only had no scheme to put forward but even could not spend the money that was allotted to it in connection with schemes which had matured. That is the policy of the present Government, Sir. They could have easily devised a proper scheme for the hand-press paper industry. They could have utilised a lot of money at least on the paper industry and could also have popularised the spinning wheel and the weaving industry by means of automatic machines in the country. Having regard to the difficulty which is staring us in the face, Government should have taken up in right earnest this spinning wheel and automatic machine but they are sleeping. They are thinking of the standard cloth and that the standard cloth will solve the entire question. Sir, we have got some inkling as to the quantity of the standard cloth that will come to us and also the price at which it will be sold. From an Associated Press report we learn that the poorest of our people will not be able to get the advantage of this standard cloth as the price at which the standard cloth will be sold is only 40 per cent. less than the ordinary cloth. Ordinary cloths are now selling at 300 times their original price. How will the poor people then be able to purchase these cloths? Will they have money to purchase such cloth? Then, Sir, how many pairs of this cloth would be available for such people?

Then, Sir, with regard to cinchona my friend Mr. Dutta has dealt with it. So I will not deal with it again.

For famine Rs. 13 lakhs have been put. But I do not know whether this would be sufficient, especially in view of the abnormal condition through which we are passing.

Under the head "Miscellaneous", for the Board of Economic Enquiry Rs. 15,000 has been put down. It is said that the Board of Enquiry has

practically been closed already. But I must say that there is a very important enquiry now pending there to which I would draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister. Of course the Hon'ble Minister is not here. But I hope the Hon'ble Minister who is taking note and who is now talking with his colleague will kindly take note of what I say. The enquiry about the warehouses for jute and other agricultural produce and for their sale is pending. A sub-committee was formed which visited Madras and other places and submitted their report. I do not know why that report was not put up before the Board of Enquiry and why was it not given effect to. This matter is very important and should be taken up immediately.

Then, Sir, I find Rs. 9¾ lakhs have been put down on account of "Vagrants" and some expenditure has been incurred already on account of staff. I do not understand how, even when there are no houses built for the vagrants and nothing has been done, there could be a pretty big staff and how more than a lakh could be spent on staff.

With regard to civil defence, Rs. 4 crores have been allotted including Government of India contribution. Here also it will be seen that out of four crores nearly three crores go towards the pay of officers. Out of this sum according to the communal ratio Rs. 150 lakhs should have gone to the Muslims; but I doubt whether the Muslim share is even Rs. 25 lakhs. A clear injustice has been done to the Muslim community in making appointments in this department. Then, Sir, how much of this Rs. 4 crores has been spent for the civil defence of the rural areas? Not a pice. Perhaps the Ministers think that if they can see to the protection of the people of cities and towns that will be enough. The people of the rural areas require looking after not because of bomb but because of the abnormal economic condition which is the direct result of the present war anl for this the Ministers should come to their relief. This is one of the subject to which attention of the Government must be paid. People are dying of malnutrition, for want of food; but the Government are spending Rs. 4 crores for the population of towns and cities. What is the number of population in the cities as compared with the rural areas? Ninety-five per cent. of the population is living in rural areas. What are you doing for this 95 per cent? You are spending Rs. 4 crores for the 5 per cent. of the population: what are you doing for the other 95 per cent. who are dying like flies due to indirect effect of war? Is this just and proper?

There has been an allotment of Rs. 17 lakhs under "Home Guards" and here also we have a melancholy story to tell. The Government of India had given direction that private parties may start civil defence organizations and those organizations should be helped by the Government. Government found that Muslims were starting national Home Guards. They could have helped Muslim National guards but instead for reason best known they recommend to start under Government patronage "Home Guards" which was to be on non-communal basis. But confidential instructions were sent out at the same time almost simultaneously that Home Guard organizations must be manned by people recommended by local Hindu Sabhaites. Captains of the organizations must be awarding to the recommendations of Hindu

Sabha. This upset the Muhammadan community. They previously agreed to join the Home Guards but after being treated in this manner no honourable man could join such organizations. As I have already said that Government of India's intention was to help the organizations set up by private bodies but this Government did not act accordingly for reasons best known to themselves.

To sum up brieuy what I have said is that the Government not only initiated any new ameliorative measures but they have definitely ignored the claims of the masses and they have been indifferent to the conditions of the rural areas where the people are starving and are dying like flies. The Government are paying no attention to this. They are doing nothing to meet the abnormal situation prevailing in the country.

Now, as regards jute and food, I shall deal with these points on the occasion of the special discussion under these two heads later on.

They have failed to give protection to the people of the country from permanent officers who, according to their own declaration, do not obey their orders. At least in the district of Mymensingh there was one such instance. A Durga Puja procession with music had to be taken out for which a licence was asked for at Kishoreganj. After examining the documents the Subdivisional Officer refused to grant the licence. The Hindus approached the District Magistrate by wire over the head of the Subdivisional Officer to issue the licence for passing the procession by the mosque with music outside prayer time. This District Magistrate who happened to be a Hindu and a Brahmin to boot granted permission to take out the procession and added that sufficient police force should accompany the procession indicating that the procession must be passed even by force. That was the order of the District Magistrate. Local Muslim representatives wired to the District Magistrate to reconsider his order on the gound that the documents showed that at no time, whether it was prayer time or not, any procession could pass by the mosque with music, but the Magistrate wired back "my previous order holds good, report complete compliance." That was the order and that resulted in the forcible passing of the procession through the streets of Kishoreganj and which resulted in four deaths and fifteen injured When this matter was sought to be discussed in course of an adjournment motion we were not permitted to do so on the ground that it was *sub judice*. But you will be surprised to learn, Sir, that the cases which were instituted against the people were withdrawn. As a matter of fact, Sir, when we went to Kishoreganj for a conference there, we found that on the very previous day all the cases were withdrawn. Sir, this shows that the institution of these cases was a mere device to avoid an adjournment motion. Sir, we have the privilege of the House to say that the District Magistrate who was solely responsible for the mischief has not been taken to task by the present Ministry. Moreover, this officer has been granted promotion for his vagaries. Sir, this officer was brought here in an exalted post with allowances and pay amounting to seven hundred rupees more than what he was actually getting at Mymensingh. Sir, the officer who was passing *ex parte* orders in an important matter does not deserve to be a servant under the British Crown.

He is more fit to be an officer under Hitler's regime. Sir, this is the way the present Ministry are dealing with their own officers. Sir, they have been prosecuting and persecuting the opposition members. They are not taking them into their confidence. The District Board Chairmen, if they happen to be League members, are being persecuted. Municipal Chairmen are being persecuted if they happen to be League members. They are gagging the press. They are gagging the platforms. They are not allowing the Muslim Leaguers to sit on any committee. Sir, the Kishoreganj enquiry report submitted by the Enquiry Committee has not been published. Only a portion of the report which was published was held up by an order of the Press Adviser. That is the way, Sir, in which they are working. I ask, Sir, are we under the British Crown or we are under Hitler's rule? The Magistrate by his way of action has shown what a communal bias he has. He does not deserve to be a servant of the British Crown. This officer had entirely forgotten that he was an officer under the British Crown when he was passing *ex parte* orders and was insisting on its being carried out in spite of the representation from the representatives of the people and the officer on the spot.

Sir, though I have got many things to say I do not want to take up more time. But one thing I would like to say here, Sir, that the present Ministry are not only not doing anything to ameliorate the condition of the people of this country, but they are doing positive injury to the Muslims and to Muslim interests. This shows, Sir, how the present Ministry is being run. With these words, Sir, I close my observations.

Mr. BIRENDRA KISHORE ROY CHOWDHURY: Sir, I would like to speak now, but as only 5 minutes are left, I think it would be better if I begin tomorrow. Or, do you think I may begin today and finish tomorrow?

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I think you may begin today for the few minutes that still remain.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, I think it would be more convenient if the honourable member begin his speech tomorrow.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Will the honourable member take much time?

Mr. BIRENDRA KISHORE ROY CHOWDHURY: About 15 minutes, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Then you may do as you like. But it would be better if you speak tomorrow.

The House stands adjourned till 1-30 p.m. tomorrow.

Adjournment.

The Council then adjourned till 1-30 p.m. on Wednesday, the 24th February, 1943.

Members absent.

The following members were absent from the meeting held on the 23rd February, 1943:—

(1) Khan Bahadur Naziruddin Ahmad.

(2) Mr. Altaf Ali.

(3) Khan Bahadur Rezzaqul Haider Chowdhury.

(4) Mr. Narendra Chandra Datta.

(5) Mr. Mohamed Hossain.

(6) Alhadj Khan Bahadur Shaikh Mohammad Jan.

(7) Mr. J. McFarlane.

(8) Rai Sahib Jogendra Nath Ray.

(9) Mr. Amulyadhone Roy.

(10) Sir Bijoy Prasad Singh Roy.

BGP-43/4-910A-750

BENGAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DEBATES

First Session, 1943—No. 7.

THE COUNCIL met in the Legislative Chamber of the Legislative Building, Calcutta, on Wednesday, the 24th February, 1943, at 1-30 p.m. being the seventh day of the First Session of 1943, pursuant to section 62(2)(a) of the Government of India Act, 1935.

Mr. Deputy President (Khan Bahadur ABDUL HAMID CHOWDHURY) was in the Chair.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Sj. Kamalendu Chakravarti.

26. Rai Sahib JATINDRA MOHAN SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state—

(a) whether Sj. Kamalendu Chakravarti, Pleader, of Balurghat, district Dinajpur, has been arrested under the Defence of India Act; if so, the date of arrest and the section or rule under which he has been arrested;

(b) in detail the activities of which he is supposed to be guilty;

(c) if it is in the contemplation to bring him to trial for any specific offence;

(d) if there was any report against him by the District Intelligence Branch of the Police; if so, what is the date of the report;

(e) if he was the working President of the Balurghat Subdivisional Hindu Mahasabha;

(f) in which jail he is now confined; and

(g) if the Government have sanctioned any allowance for his wife and children; if not, whether the Government contemplate granting any allowance?

MINISTER in charge of the HOME and FINANCE DEPARTMENTS (the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq): (a) Yes: under Defence of India Rule 129 on the 6th January, 1943.

(b) I refer the honourable member to the provisions of the Rule quoted. I am not prepared to give in detail the nature of the prejudicial activities in furtherance of the recent disturbances for which he was arrested.

(c) Not at present.

(d) I am not prepared to give an answer to this question.

(e) Yes.

(f) Dinajpur.

(g) No: no application with this object has yet been received by Government.

Rai Sahib JATINDRA MOHAN SEN: Arising out of (f), the answer given is that he is confined at Dinajpur Jail. Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is at present in the Dinajpur Jail or whether he was there when the answer was prepared some time ago?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The answer has been prepared by the department and I do not know where he is at present: but possibly he is now in the Dinajpur Jail. I will find out definitely where he is now.

Rai Sahib JATINDRA MOHAN SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to enquire if he is still at Dinajpur?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Yes.

Sj. Barada Bhusan Chakravarti.

27. Rai Sahib JATINDRA MOHAN SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) the date when Sj. Barada Bhusan Chakravarti, M.A., B.L., Pleader, of Dinajpur, was arrested and the nature of the offence for which he was arrested;

(*b*) whether his wife Sreemati Asha Chakravarti made an application shortly after his arrest for an allowance for the maintenance of his family including herself; and

(*c*) whether the Government has sanctioned any allowance; if so, what is the amount?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) Babu Baroda Bhusan Chakravarti was arrested on the 7th September, 1942, with a view to prevent him from acting in any manner prejudicial to the Defence of British India, public safety, maintenance of public order or the efficient prosecution of the war, and detained under rule 26 of the Defence of India Rules. He has since been released.

(*b*) Yes.

(*c*) An allowance of Rs.40 per month has been sanctioned and will be payable for the period from the date of the arrest to the date of the release.

Expenditures during last six years.

28. Mr. NUR AHMED: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Finance Department be pleased to state what was the total expenditure from the provincial revenues in Bengal in the financial years 1936-37, 1937-38, 1938-39, 1939-40, 1940-41 and 1941-42?

(*b*) Out of the total expenditures in these financial years, what was the percentage of expenditure from the provincial revenues, on (*i*) Police, (*ii*) Education, (*iii*) Public Health, (*iv*) Industry, (*v*) Agriculture, (*vi*) Co-operative Department, (*vii*) Medical, (*viii*) General Administration and (*ix*) Civil Defence?

(*c*) Was there any increase in expenditure under any of the heads mentioned in part (*b*) in any of these financial years?

(*d*) If so, what is the percentage of increase under any head, and that in what year?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) to (*c*) A statement furnishing the requisite particulars is laid on the Table.

(*d*) Percentages of increase under particular heads in particular years can be readily deduced from the statement but cannot be conveniently exhibited in it.

Statement referred to in reply to question No. 28.

	Actual expenditure (in thousands of rupees).					
	1936-37.	1937-38.	1938-39.	1939-40.	1940-41.	1941-42.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs
(*a*) Total expenditure from provincial revenues.	11,74,16	11,83,13	12,76,62	13,71,24	14,45.39	15.50,38
(*b*) (*i*) General Administration (including Debt Conciliation).	1,40,47	1,49,82	1,59,12	1,70,12	1,70,09	1,73,11
(*ii*) Police ..	2,31,12	2,24,20	2,21,27	2,28,28	2,34,50	2,49,57
(*iii*) Education (including Anglo-Indian and European).	1,32,75	1,36,96	1,55,18	1,62,59	1,72,02	1,75,62
(*iv*) Medical ..	51,48	52,87	55,96	56,33	56,35	52,91
(*v*) Public Health ..	34,64	30,32	40,60	39,39	39,76	39,30
(*vi*) Agriculture ..	10,60	11,53	14,03	21,64	69,10	50,49
(*vii*) Co-operation ..	11,28	11,61	13,38	14,49	14,47	16,43
(*viii*) Industries (including Cinchona).	14,56	16,05	18,32	20,22	21,13	23,18
(*ix*) Civil Defence ..	..	..	..	57	2,07	63,73

	Percentage of expenditure from provincial revenues.					
	1936-37.	1937-38.	1938-39.	1939-40.	1940-41.	1941-42.
(*a*) Total expenditure from provincial revenues.	..	..	..	..	..	..
(*b*) (*i*) General Administration (including Debt Conciliation).	11·9	12·6	12·5	12·4	11·8	11·2
(*ii*) Police ..	19·7	18·9	17·3	16·6	16·2	16·1
(*iii*) Education (including Anglo-Indian and European).	11·3	11·6	12·1	11·8	11·9	11·3
(*iv*) Medical ..	4·4	4·5	4·4	4·1	3·9	3·4
(*v*) Public Health ..	2·9	2·6	3·2	2·9	2·7	2·5
(*vi*) Agriculture ..	·9	·9	1·1	1·6	4·8	3·2
(*vii*) Co-operation ..	·9	·9	1·05	1·0	1·0	1·0
(*viii*) Industries (including Cinchona).	1·2	1·3	1·4	1·4	1·3	1·5
(*ix*) Civil Defence ..	..	..	..	·04	·1	4·1

Estimated production, consumption, export and import of rice during 1942-43.

29. Mr. BIRENDRA KISHORE ROY CHOUDHURY: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) the estimated production of rice in Bengal during the year 1942-43;
(*b*) the estimated amount of this commodity required for consumption in Bengal during the year 1942-43;
(*c*) the amount of export of rice from this Province during the year 1942-43;
(*d*) the amount of import of rice into this Province from outside during the same period?

MINISTER in charge of the AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Hashem Ali Khan): (*a*) 6,938,800 tons.

(*b*) 9,266,800 tons.

(*c*) and (*d*) I have no information.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: How does the Hon'ble Minister propose to meet the deficit which is as much as 33 per cent.?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Government is seriously thinking over the matter.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Have the Government got any scheme to meet this deficit?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Sir, this subject is dealt with by the Minister in charge of Food. So, I am not competent to say anything about this subject.

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister kindly state whether the Directorate of Civil Supplies has taken up the matter in hand as to how to meet the deficit?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Sir, I have already submitted that the Directorate of Civil Supplies are considering the matter very seriously.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that the situation is already serious? And I think that the serious consideration of this subject by the Directorate should be speeded up to make it fruitful.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Of course, Sir, I believe that there is sufficient deficit of rice in the province of Bengal and the Directorate of Civil Supplies are also aware of the fact. They are also seriously considering how to meet the situation and in order to solve the problem earlier there has been a discussion in the Bengal Legislative Assembly and we shall also have a discussion on food situation in this House. We shall see what we can achieve after the deliberations are over.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: I am afraid, Sir, no result will be forthcoming of those discussions.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Sir, if action is not taken promptly, people may die and disaster may happen.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: As I have already submitted, Sir, this subject is the concern of the Commerce Department and if this department is written to, necessary information may be available.

Messages received from the Assembly.

The SECRETARY: Sir, the following messages have been received from the Bengal Legislative Assembly:—

(1) The Bengal Legislative Assembly at its meeting held on February 19, 1943, agreed to the Bengal Local Self-Government (Amendment) Bill, 1941, as passed by the Bengal Legislative Council, without any amendments.

S. J. HASHEMY,
Deputy Speaker,
Bengal Legislative Assembly.

(2) The Bengal Legislative Assembly at its meeting held on February 19, 1943, agreed to the Bengal Land-Revenue Sales (Amendment) Bill, 1941, as passed by the Bengal Legislative Council, without any amendments.

S. J. HASHEMY,
Deputy Speaker,
Bengal Legislative Assembly.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, I crave the indulgence of the House to give notice on the floor of the House that on the 1st March, 1943, I intend to introduce the Bengal Non-Agricultural Tenancy (Temporary Provisions) Extending Bill, 1943, in the Council. By this Bill I want for further extension of time by one year.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Now the "General Discussion" of the budget will be resumed. But before the discussion takes place, I should like to inform the House that I understand that the number of honourable members who are willing to participate in the debate is large. So I feel the necessity for restricting the time-limit to 15 minutes under rule 42 of the Bengal Legislative Council Procedure Rules and so every member will be entitled to speak for 15 minutes.

Budget Discussion.

Mr. BIRENDRA KISHORE ROY CHOWDHURY: Sir, the budget which the Hon'ble Mr. Fazlul Huq has presented and the statement which he has made in that connection have not given us as much satisfaction as we might have expected to derive from them. Before I enter into the details

of the budget, I think it is my duty to point out that the stop-gap arrangement introduced after the resignation of Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee from the Ministership of Finance ought to have been replaced long before the presentation of the budget by some permanent arrangement. I, for one, Sir, do not believe in an arrangement under which the Minister in charge of a spending department should also be the Finance Minister. It is true that when the Congress was in office in some of the provinces, the Chief Minister in some instances held the portfolio of Finance in combination with some spending departments. But, I may repeat, this is an arrangement which never gives satisfaction. It would have been wise and conducive to better administration if the Hon'ble Mr. Fazlul Huq, who is the Chief Minister and the Home Minister, could give up the portfolio of Finance and hand it over to some suitable colleague. I believe, Sir, that longer delay will not be indulged in, in appointing a new Minister of Finance.

Total revenue receipts are estimated for 1943-44 to be Rs. 16 crores and 2 lakhs, while the estimated expenditure on revenue account stands at Rs. 17 crores and 55 lakhs. In other words, it is a deficit budget, the deficit being to the extent of one crore and a half. I am, of course, not staggered at all by the deficit. Nor do I take exception to the increase in expenditure as such during the last few years. For a province of five crores of people, a budget of Rs. 17½ crores is not in any way extraordinary. Not long ago, it is true, the actual expenditure in the province would not exceed Rs. 11 crores. Today we are budgeting for an expenditure of Rs. 17½ crores. In other words, the expenses of public administration have increased by more than 50 per cent. I may repeat, Sir, that this increase by itself would not be objectionable. It would be objectionable only if it did not make for any permanent moral and material progress of the province. A portion of this increased expenditure is, of course, due to the extraordinary charges necessitated by the outbreak of the present war and particularly by the Japanese war. For instance, we find that under the head "Civil Defence", the province has budgeted for an expenditure of Rs. 3 crores and 75 lakhs. Of this the Central Government will bear the burden of Rs. 2 crores and 62 lakhs. But the remaining Rs. 1 crore and 14 lakhs has to be found by the Provincial Government. I cannot say, Sir, that the arrangement which has been arrived at with the Central Government in respect of civil defence expenditure is fully justifiable. For instance, the civil defence measures undertaken by the Provincial Government in regard to its own property or for its own employees have to be financed wholly and exclusively by the Provincial Government. Similar measures taken by the local bodies including the Calcutta Corporation are also to be financed only partly by the Central Government. I believe, Sir, that civil defence is part and parcel of general defence of the country against foreign attack in any form or shape. In view of this it is but meet that all expenditure incurred in a particular province on that account should be wholly borne by the Central Government.

Even after spending Rs. 1 crore and 14 lakhs on account of civil defence, the province will have more than Rs. 16 crores to spend on other items. From this we might have expected that something will really be done for

improvement in the existing condition of things in this province. But, Sir, one scans the different items of grants in vain to notice any favourable change in the policy of the Government in regard to permanent improvement in moral and material conditions of the province. Not to speak of the normal yields of the province, even the extraordinary emergencies created by the war will not be properly and squarely met by the arrangements which the Government has made. We find that Rs. 4 lakhs and 54 thousand has been budgeted for the organisation of a Directorate of Civil Supplies. The Chief Minister in his statement has tried to exculpate the officers now employed in the Directorate from the blame which people have naturally attributed to them for the complete dislocation in the civil supplies in this province. He has even gone to the length to point out that during the last war His Majesty's Government took one whole year to make proper arrangement for a satisfactory supply of necessaries to the people. They had to make one experiment after another and then only they succeeded.

So if some of the experiments in regard to civil supplies in Bengal have failed and failed disastrously, no blame should really attach to the officers employed in tackling this particular problem. I do not, Sir, appreciate in the least this particular point of view of the Chief Minister. The war broke out in 1939, three years and a half ago. After that, the emergency in civil supplies, which might arise at any moment, ought to have been foreseen and arrangements should have been made to meet it when it would actually arise. But really speaking very little was done in this regard. It is true that the Joint Secretary to the Commerce Department was given extra duty to deal with this question with a small staff. Later on when this arrangement proved to be not only inadequate but disastrous, a separate Directorate of Civil Supplies was set up, consisting of three members of the Indian Civil Service and a subordinate staff. This Directorate has also been at work for wellnigh eight months and during this period it has failed to cope with the situation. We do not see any satisfactory reason for the muddle that has been created in this regard. In the first place, it should be known that the principles and details according to which the supply of necessaries has been ensured to the people of Great Britain and other countries were available to the officers in charge of civil supplies here. They should and might have been certainly of great assistance to them in the formulation of principles and methods for ensuring necessary supplies to the people. Secondly, it should also be emphasised that the members of the Indian Civil Service have been all along advertised as the best trained administrators of India, able to cope with any administrative question on short notice and tackle any emergency, however great and however complex. But we find, Sir, that this much-advertised administrative ability exist nowhere. In the middle of 1942 the I.C.S. officer in charge was removed from this department. The Directorate was created and three other civilians were placed in charge of it. Now, when this Directorate also has failed to deal with the situation and in fact has made confusion worse confounded, an extraordinary step was taken by the Government. The Director of Civil Supplies was removed and placed on some special duty while a Judge of the High Court had to

be taken out of the Bench and invested with the duties and functions of the Director of Civil Supplies. What, Sir, does this show and prove? If it proves anything, it only proves that the administrative branch of the Indian Civil Service does no longer produce that ability, that integrity and that readiness to undertake emergency duties as they may arise. The importation of a High Court Judge for performing the functions of a Director of Civil Supplies is certainly a sad commentary on the traditions of the executive service in this country.

While, Sir, in regard to the arrangement for civil supplies, the Government has failed rather completely to cope with the emergency, in some other fields also I cannot say that I can sincerely congratulate the Provincial Government on the steps they have taken. In respect of medical organisation, for instance, I find that Government arrangement for meeting the extraordinary situation created by the Japanese War is rather haphazard. In Great Britain, while there has been a considerable flow of money towards creating adequate arrangements for medical relief for those who may be the victims of air raid, they have seen to it that this money is utilised not merely for temporary purposes. They have, I may emphasise, arranged for permanent improvement in medical organisation through this money. Hospitals in the districts, more or less immune from air attacks, have been so improved as to constitute base hospitals for air raid victims. When the war would be over, these hospitals which belonged to second or third class before would be far more well equipped and would minister to the needs of the local people far better than before. So while the British public is spending money to any extent, it is spending it not only for meeting an emergency but also to create permanent improvement in the organisation of medical relief for the people. But what, Sir, has been the policy of the Provincial Government here? It is not necessary for me to point out on this occasion that the number of beds available in all the hospitals in this province is too inadequate to meet any real emergency. A year ago the total number of beds was less than nine thousand in the whole province. I believe, Sir, the Government cannot reassure us that this number today will be greater than twelve thousand. So far as I know again many of the new beds have been placed in already overcrowded buildings so that as soon as the war emergency is over these beds will have to be taken out. In other words, the hospitals will not gain anything on a permanent basis. I should also point out, Sir, in this connection that while in many of the hospitals physicians and surgeons in charge have been given a large extra allowance from the Government grant, nothing has really been done to add to the permanent equipment of the hospitals. In other words, a few lakhs of rupees will be spent for two or three years but after the war the hospitals will remain where they were. I do not think this is the right way of spending public money.

Under the head "Public Health", the Government has demanded a grant of more than Rs. 40 lakhs. The sum is absolutely inadequate, when we consider that we are dealing with a population of 5 crores and with a province notorious for its unhealthiness, I shall not have the time to deal with all the aspects of the public health problem in Bengal but there is one

question to which I must allude. This is the question of the supply of quinine. Dr. Bentley, a former Director of Public Health in this province, once pointed out that in view of the malaria outbreaks, Bengal should consume every year at least three hundred thousand pounds of quinine. It is unfortunate that the Government is now calculating the total consumption of quinine in this country on the basis of only sixty thousand pounds for Bengal. In other words, it is now assumed that the people of Bengal can free themselves from malaria by consuming one-fifth of the amount of quinine prescribed by Dr. Bentley. But the tragic picture is not completed yet. Even the quinine which is now prescribed for Bengal is not available to the poor multitude which suffers silently but surely from this fell disease. No control worth the name has yet been introduced as to quinine. The result is while quinine is being made available to commercial firms, it is being denied to the people who need it during eight months of the year.

In this connection I should also refer to the policy which the Government has pursued for years in regard to the cultivation of cinchona and the manufacture of quinine. Because of the unhealthy influence on our Governments of the kine-bureau located at Batavia, cinchona cultivation was neglected and quinine manufacture was not undertaken on any large scale. That this policy has been disastrous is now being borne out by the unhappy situation in which the Government and the people have been placed. Batavia has fallen into Japanese hands and the supply of quinine has been stopped from there. The policy of depending on others even in a field where we could have provided for our own has proved seriously detrimental, as it should prove on all occasions, to the interests of the people. I do not find, Sir, that the eyes of the Government have still been opened. In the U.S.S.R. cinchona plants cannot remain on the soil for more than a year, because of the peculiar climatic conditions. But with the aid of science these plants, barely one year old, are efficiently utilised in the manufacture of quinine. But here we are told that unless a plant is at least nine years old, it does not yield the properties necessary for the manufacture of quinine. So we must wait for more than half a decade before the establishment at Kurseong can proceed to manufacture quinine on an adequate scale. Possibly it will manufacture it only when the necessity for it will no longer be there. It is time that the Government should be more up and doing in this regard.

I find, Sir, that the Government has budgeted for free vaccination and for inspection of vaccination. But I am drawing the attention of the Government to a very important matter in this regard. The Government has an establishment for the manufacture of cholera vaccine. It is unfortunate, Sir, that for some time past this manufacture of vaccines has been done under the supervision and on the responsibility of a person who has no qualifications for such responsibility. He is an ordinary graduate without adequate technical qualifications. I understand, Sir, that recently the post in which this gentleman has been allowed to officiate to the detriment of the reputation of Government vaccine was advertised. The Public Service Commission, I further understand, has made its recommendations. But so far no effect has been given to them. The ordinary graduate is still in full

power in the Vaccine Establishment. I hope the Government will take an early step to do away with an arrangement which is bringing only discredit upon Government vaccine.

Before, Sir, I conclude I would like to make a few observations on the education policy of the Government. It is known to all, Sir, that the outbreak of Japanese war completely dislocated the educational organisation in Calcutta and the areas round about it. Many of the colleges have also similarly suffered. I do not ignore the fact that last October a sum of money was granted by the Government to bring relief to the teachers. But, Sir, it was only a drop of relief in an ocean of suffering. Apart from the problem of ameliorating the conditions of those teachers who have become unemployed as a result of the schools going out of existence, there is the problem of improving the conditions of those institutions which are still catering to the needs of our boys and girls. The institutions which are responsible for the education of the future generation must be in proper economic solvency so that they may provide for necessary amenities to those getting instruction under their supervision. But so far the Government has failed to cope with the situation. But this I ought to emphasise here and now that Government should see to it that our boys and girls get their education only in the proper atmosphere and in proper environments.

I know, Sir, that the conditions today are extraordinary and the position in which the Ministers find themselves is also intensely difficult. But I hope, Sir, that the matters to which I have drawn their attention will receive due care at their hands.

Mr. DHIRENDRA LAL BARUA: Mr. Deputy President, Sir, in presenting the budget for the coming year the Hon'ble the Chief Minister and Minister for Finance has held before us in his introductory statement a short but vivid picture of the abnormal situation created by the present world-war and natural cataclysms typhoon, flood added to campaign of sabotage and hooliganism initiated in August last after the arrest of the Congress leaders. When I rise to offer my criticisms of certain aspects of the budget before us and set forth certain grievances from the point of view of my community, it is not to be understood that I do not realise the gravity of the present economic situation in India in general and of the province of Bengal in particular. I do appreciate the great difficulties confronting the economic life of the people of Bengal and yet I fail to understand why the veteran Chief Minister and Minister for Finance could not allocate any amount to make a special provision for the educational advancement of the Buddhists of the province, when money could be provided for meeting so many exigencies of the time.

During the last three years I have been trying to impress on the minds of the leaders of all political groups that unless greater educational facilities are given to my community, its all-round progress can never be ensured. I need not repeat that the Buddhists of the province have had reasons to be grateful for the renewed statutory provision made in the budget for an annual grant of Rs. 5,900 for Buddhist *tols*. But the secular education need to be

implemented by a similar provision. For want of such encouragement it has not been possible in the past for my community to make appreciable headway in order to acquire the competence for taking its legitimate share in the different branches of administration.

As you are aware, the Buddhists, Indian Christians and some of the Hill Tribes are taken to constitute the minority communities in Bengal. In consideration of their peculiar position in relation to two major communities of Hindus and Muslims, the Government of Bengal decided at first to make this rule that 5 per cent. of posts should be reserved for the candidates from them in filling up all vacancies. When subsequently the Government found this rule was not workable in that very form, it was modified so as to read that special consideration should be given whenever suitable candidates from these communities were available.

I was pained to hear that in the opinion of some of the popular Ministers the word "special" conveyed no special meaning at all. But the word "special" as prefixed to "consideration" in the Government circular was intended to convey a definite meaning and read with reference to the historical context it meant, I dare say, that the original intention of the Government to reserve 5 per cent. of posts to the qualified candidates from the minority communities remained as it was;—only the *modus operandi* changed. The 5 per cent. rule might be satisfactorily given effect to by adopting a well-defined periodical scheme. The verbal modification of the rule did not certainly imply that the candidates of the minority communities were required in each case of vacancy to compete with the candidates from amongst the Caste Hindus, which would be flagrantly absurd. For in that case a pigmy numerically, financially and intellectually, would be expected to try his strength with a giant. The position becomes still worse and more ludicrous when, denied greater educational facilities, the minority communities are left to run the race with so fast runners as the Caste Hindus.

When I say this nothing can be more distant from my intention that any section of the people of Bengal should be deprived of its legitimate rights. There must be something wrong somewhere and I say that the interests of the different communities must be readjusted on an equitable basis. Before that standard of efficiency is expected of our candidates, there must be increased facilities given for their education and training in Arts and Science, in higher, general and vocational subjects. But what have we got so far by way of educational facilities? There are two hostels for the Buddhist students, one in Calcutta and the other in Chittagong. True. But as regards seat rents, the boarders are not entitled to any concession whatever. As for stipends we are absolutely at the mercy of the disbursing officer of the Department of Education. If the present popular Ministry mean to promote equitably the cause of advancement of all sections and communities, they must not grudge some special provision in their budget for the higher, general and technical education of our students. All things can wait but not education, mainly on which depends the future progress of any people or community. I pray, let me not cry any longer in the wilderness.

Mrs. K. D'ROZARIO: Mr. Deputy President, Sir, at a time like the present when war and famine beset the land, one cannot think in terms of balanced budgets. One must be thankful to a Finance Minister who has the courage to face a deficit in order that heavier load may not be placed on the people. The enhanced entertainments tax and the increased duty on electricity will undoubtedly weigh heavily on the urban Anglo-Indian community in particular, but things might have been worse. Like others, I can assure you, Sir, that our people are feeling the severe strain of the high cost of living today. I need not tell the House how great is the scandal of high prices, how inexhaustible the move of the unscrupulous profiteer. This beast of prey in human form, has no compunction in battening even on the infant in arms, the sick and the poor. No measures can be considered too stern to prevent his greedy operations. It is a regrettable fact that the measures of price control are so ineffective that a much firmer line of action is indicated against persons who exploit the public at a time like this. It is not merely a matter of price control and penalties. The Government must take a real grasp of the situation, all along the line, from producer to consumer, and I feel certain that if the Government took courage in both hands and did so, they would receive immediate and ample support from the people. In the realm of education, we have to face the same attenuated means as before. I mean that this year again we see no rise in Anglo-Indian educational grants. I am not going to indulge in special pleading. My plea in regard to education is general. The entire education grant for all communities falls grievously short of needs. I feel that if sufficient justice were done to educational needs of all people in the province, justice would be done to our own educational requirements and that without dependence on any statutory minimum. I say this because I have no little faith in the growing appreciation of the larger communities towards the smaller. Indeed the Anglo-Indian community whom I have the honour to represent in this House, although so small is of the utmost significance, not only to India but to the world. We should not lose sight of this fact, for if today we are fighting for freedom from fear, it must be for all people, large and small. If today we are fighting for freedom from want it must be for all, large and small. Otherwise the struggle for India's freedom is meaningless and the horrors of war in the West and in the East a useless sacrifice. Mr. Gandhi's life, which we all hope will be saved, will have been lived in vain. Like the late Sir Henry Gidney I place the advancement of the Anglo-Indian community in the advancement of the Indian people as a whole. That is why when I look upon any Indian budget, and this one in particular, in times normal or abnormal, the little satisfaction I have for the things that are done is quite balanced by dissatisfaction for the things not done. There is no more crying need in India today, and in this province, than the development of social services. How can we hope to compare with other countries who are doing so much in this respect, as it evidenced in the Beveridge Report, when the education of our people lags so far behind, when two-thirds do not get a square meal a day, when infant and maternal and adult mortality is so tremendously high, when the medical and health

services are so poor, and inadequate. If we were to meet these needs to anything nigh the point of adequacy our budget figures for this province alone would be multiplied ten fold, a hundred fold, nay a thousand fold. But then how well would the people be served, and included among them would be the Anglo-Indian community. That is the sort of budget everybody would like, that is the standard we should fix, a standard common to all parties, to all communities and sections of this House. From this standard one can only deplore the littleness of the budget provisions before this House, though from the point of view of the circumstances with which the Finance Minister has to contend, there is cause for quiet satisfaction, and that the situation might have been even more distressing.

Mr. NUR AHMED: Sir, with your permission I wish to make a few observations on the budget estimate presented to this House by the Hon'ble Chief Minister in his capacity as Finance Minister. Sir, I am very sorry to say that I cannot congratulate the Hon'ble Finance Minister on this budget. Sir, his budget is a hotchpotch and a do-nothing budget. It is gloomy and dismal from a national point of view. Sir, this budget does not contain any scheme of rural reconstruction, any scheme for the improvement of the lot of the vast mass of people of whom he claims to be the leader. There is no scheme, no indication of any scheme for any improvement or reconstruction. When we look to the other provinces, provinces which are being now administered by the bureaucrats, we find that a fund has been created under the name of After-War Development Fund. Even in the province of the Punjab, though it has now a deficit budget, two funds have been created—one is known as the Mass Improvement Fund and the other as the Soldiers' Rehabilitation Fund. Year after year some amount is being allotted to these two funds. Madras, the United Provinces and Bihar also have opened such funds like the Punjab but, Sir, in the Bengal budget do we see any such sign? Not only do we not see any such sign but on the contrary we find that even the all-important items for the improvement of sanitation and public health of the people are wanting. Sir, in reply to a question of mine today the Hon'ble Finance Minister has made a statement which shows that the percentage of expenditure under such heads as "Medical" and "Public Health" and "Agriculture" is very low here. But in spite of that low expenditure, Sir, no provision has been made for the nation-building services, and there has been no scheme for the improvement of rural areas. It is a well-known fact that a large number of people have flocked together in the villages and the number of people in many villages has increased and it is also well known that sanitation in rural Bengal is lamentably bad. But in spite of that no such scheme has been embodied in this year's budget estimate. There is also no scheme for improvement of the cottage industry or small-factory industries. Even in the other provinces which are now administered by the bureaucrats such schemes are forged ahead; we find that the Punjab has proceeded to take advantage of the war and has put into operation scheme after scheme for improvement and reconstruction and for the expansion of the cottage industries. It has supplied blankets, hosiery and other war materials amounting to crores of

rupees. That Government is financing these schemes on a large scale and have naturally had to borrow money, but here in Bengal we find that no scheme has even been framed for these industries. As regards Madras, it has monopolised the cottage industries and Bengal's requirements of *lungi* are practically supplied by Madras alone, and it has received encouragement from their Government to do this.

There is another very important matter, a matter on which all our progress depends and that is mass education. But what do we find? We find that nothing substantial has been allotted in the budget. The only thing we find in the budget is that there is a huge deficit of Rs. 1 crore and 53 lakhs, and the closing balance of 1943-44 reduced to Rs. 86 lakhs. This is really a very disquieting factor. What for this deficit? We find during the last four years, including the year to come, Bengal spent in total Rs. 6 crores 7 lakhs, that is at the rate of Rs. 150 lakhs, more than its annual income, in spite of the fact that its revenue from taxation and revenue receipt income has increased by more than Rs. 2 crores. But still the result is disastrous. Up to 1943-44 Bengal would owe for a loan of Rs. 4,75 lakhs excluding a sum of Rs. 1,30 lakhs which was drawn from its opening balance. It is indeed a very sad commentary on the budget and having regard to the economic aspects of Bengal now, it does not reflect to the credit of the Finance Minister to produce a budget like this.

Let us now see, Sir, how the sums have been spent and how this large increase in expenditure has been accounted for. Has it been spent on nation-building services? Or has it been spent on any beneficial projects for the poor masses? It appears to me from an examination of the figures in the budget that Bengal budget spends proportionately a very large amount on security and administrative services but a very little amount on the nation-building services.

I now take the revenue side. Going through it one thing attracts our attention. I was sorry to say that I cannot congratulate the Ministry and the Progressive Coalition Party on the presentation of this gloomy budget but it is rather a matter for congratulation that the income under the head "Excise" has increased by more than Rs. 93 lakhs. If it is a matter for congratulation, certainly the Ministry deserve our congratulation. We find every day the consumption of country spirit, the consumption of *ganja* and opium, is increasing. Instead of decreasing, the consumption is increasing every day. It is a known fact that the policy of gradual reduction of the excise shops has been inaugurated in Bengal. But in result we find that all on a sudden there is an increase in the Excise Revenue of Rs. 93 lakhs.

Sir, by comparison we find that under the head "country spirit" there has been an increase from Rs. 77 lakhs to Rs. 1,14 lakhs, under "Opium" from Rs. 33 lakhs to Rs. 43 lakhs, under "Hemp and other drugs" from Rs. 28 lakhs to Rs. 33 lakhs. Under the head "Country spirit" alone there has been an increase of Rs. 72 lakhs, under "Opium" Rs. 10 lakhs, "Hemp and other drugs" Rs. 5 lakhs. Under these three heads there has been an increase of Rs. 87 lakhs out of a total increase of Rs. 93 lakhs. It has been stated in the

Explanatory Memorandum that the increase is due to "larger consumption of country liquor owing partly to scanty supply of foreign liquor and partly to influx of non-Bengalee labourers, evacuees and camp-followers who are addicted to liquor" and the increase under "Opium" has been stated to be due to "larger consumption of opium owing to the influx of foreigners—evacuees and others—addicted to this drug". But, Sir, if an enquiry committee is appointed to examine the matter thoroughly, it will be found how much truth there is in the above explanation. For instance, I may cite the example of Madras. Certainly there were also many evacuees but has there been any substantial increase in the consumption of liquor? But all on a sudden in this province there has been an increase of Rs. 93 lakhs under "Excise". In Madras, under the leadership of Mr. Rajagopalachariar they have reduced the consumption of liquor in their province. All of you are, Sir, aware how this liquor or country spirit ruins every house. So, I appeal to the Ministry to stop this increase. For God's sake do not encourage people to take to this habit of drinking.

Sir, the next item which strikes our attention most is "Police". We find there is a large increase under this head "Expenditure on Police". In 1940-41, the expenditure was Rs. 2,34 lakhs, it has now increased to Rs. 2,89 lakhs. In the course of two years there has been an increase of Rs. 55 lakhs. In Madras for example, in spite of this emergency, there has not been any appreciable increase in their Police budget. Madras, with an area of 124,000 square miles have provided Rs. 1,62 lakhs on Police. United Provinces with an area of 112,000 square miles have provided for Rs. 1,78 lakhs and the Punjab with an area of 167,000 square miles have budgeted Rs. 1,35 lakhs for Police.

Madras with a population of six crores and with an area larger than Bengal is tackling her educational problem satisfactorily. But why Bengal is lagging behind Madras in this respect. It is most regrettable that in the Punjab there has been an increase of Rs. 13 lakhs within two years but in Bengal there has been an increase of about Rs. 5 lakhs. Sir, as regards primary education, I find Bengal spending less than previous year in spite of the fact that the expenditure has been reduced. In 1942-43 Madras has budgeted Rs. 2,95,40,905 on primary education against Bengal's figure of Rs. 1 crore 75 lakhs. Sir, United Provinces has allotted on this head R·. 2 crores and 18 lakhs and the Punjab has budgeted Rs. 1 crore 60 lakhs. As regards the total income, Bengal's income is now equal to that of Madras, but Madras has budgeted larger sums, even Rs. 1 crore more than Bengal. Sir, the result is very disastrous. The percentage of literacy is increasing in paper only but really literacy is not spreading in Bengal at all. Sir, under head "General Administration" Bengal as compared with other provinces is spending more. Bombay has spent Rs. 73 lakhs, Punjab Rs. 1 crore 20 lakhs, United Provinces Rs. 1 crore 43 lakhs, but Bengal has spent only Rs. 1 crore 43 lakhs. Sir, here also Bengal compares very unfavourably. Sir, the administration of justice is very costly in Bengal. Bombay has spent Rs. 67 lakhs on administration of justice and Madras Rs. 91 lakhs, United Provinces Rs. 71 lakhs, Punjab Rs. 54, lakhs but

Bengal will spend Rs. 11 crores 2 lakhs Sir, as regards the expenditure on medical branch, Bengal has not made any progress. Bengal had spent Rs. 56 lakhs in 1940-41 but it has budgeted only Rs. 54 lakhs in 1942-43. Then, Sir, under "Public Health" Bengal's expenditure has been reduced from Rs. 48 lakhs to Rs. 38 lakhs and for the year 1942-43 Bengal has allotted Rs. 40 lakhs only. But Bombay has spent Rs. 55 lakhs and Madras Rs. 1 crore 7 lakhs on this head. Sir, as regards the head "Agriculture" also, Bengal's budget estimate has been reduced from Rs. 69 lakhs in 1942-43 to Rs. 52 lakhs in 1943-44. Sir, the budget is very gloomy, very disappointing from all aspects. So we cannot congratulate on the Finance Minister for his present budget.

Mr. KRISHNA CHANDRA ROY CHOWDHURY: Mr. Deputy President, Sir, I would only confine my remarks to the forest policy of the Government in charge of my honourable friend, Mr. Burman, who, I find, is the only Minister present on the Treasury Bench today. Everybody knows that the war situation has created a terrible scarcity of timber, particularly teak which used to come from Burma, with the result that almost all the building operations in Calcutta have been held up for want of timber and other imported materials and thousands of mistries and masons have been thrown out of employment. It is true that in the Chittagong forests some teak is available but it will take some years before the trees are matured and the timber becomes fit for use. The *sal* and *khair* forests of Jalpaiguri, the home of the Hon'ble Forest Minister, are paid more attention than any other Government forests, because Jalpaiguri produces timber and other kinds of wood suitable for railway sleepers, tea-chests and *khair*. But it is a long long way from Calcutta, and to bring down the *sal* wood and other timber from Jalpaiguri to Calcutta would be a very expensive job; besides, railway transport is not available in adequate measure so that it is not worth while to think of Jalpaiguri timber for Calcutta. I would therefore urge upon the Hon'ble Minister to study the question of timber from Government forests nearer to Calcutta and much more important to the people of Calcutta and its suburbs. *Sundari* wood as is well known is found in abundance in the Sunderbans. There is also *garan* and the most valuable *golpatha* which is used by poor people for thatching. Everybody knows that Calcutta is called the city of palaces but the suburbs are not palaces where poor people and industrial workers live in thatched houses. For thatching and building huts *golpatha* and *garan* are absolutely essential and they are to be found in abundance in the Sunderbans. There is a sort of timber known as *keora* which is also grown in abundance in the Sunderbuns and if *keora* log is properly seasoned—I hope the Hon'ble Minister must have heard of *keora* from the Forest Officers—it may be used as timber for house building in Calcutta and for furnitures just as high class timber is used. The Sunderbuns forest is over 2,000 square miles but it is one of the most neglected of the Government's forest divisions. Government Forest Experts made schemes after schemes known as Lloyd's Scheme, Sir Henry Farmurgdon's Scheme and Trafford's plan. During the currency of

Trafford's plan—the annual revenue from Sunderbans increased from Rs. 5½ in 1926 to Rs. 10⅓ lakhs mainly from sale of poor men's *golpatha* and firewood, but the staff is quite inadequate for its improvement and expenditure very low. The question of fuel for the poor is most vital. The price of firewood used by hundreds of thousands of workmen has gone up from six annas a maund to two rupees within last 6 months. Sunderbans is so full of best firewood and is only 60 miles from the rail-heads, Diamond Harbour, Basirhat or Canning. It can also be approached by river transport, boat transport is the cheapest; although big steamers also go there. This Sunderbans is the source of many kinds of wood and firewood and Sunderbans regeneration should be more and more encouraged. There is another important factor and that is the growing demand for charcoal which is now used by motor cars and buses in lieu of petrol and which is to be found I mean the wood from which charcoal is made there in abundance. After the war we do not think the price of petrol will come down to its pre-war level and therefore gas plant and wood charcoal will have to be used for motor cars and motor buses in increased quantity. In this view of the case the wood charcoal will be a very important commodity. As I have said before the *keora* timber which is found within the ranges of Satkhira-Basirhat is very good timber for making furniture, windows and doors and when properly seasoned they will be most important factors in the future building operations in Calcutta. I therefore request the Hon'ble Minister to pay the closest possible attention to the seasoning of the *keora* timber, which is the most difficult part of utilisation of *keora*. The forest utilisation officers are indeed very anxious to help. In the United Provinces, Bihar and the Punjab the Government have provided seasoned kilns for this purpose. It should be the duty of Bengal Government to provide facilities for proper seasoning of *keora* and other Sunderbans timber plant. With these remarks I close my observations.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: Mr. Deputy President, Sir, it is not very pleasant or stimulating to have to speak on the budget in this House, namely, the Bengal Legislative Council. Sir, the budget is presented to the Bengal Legislative Council for a very limited circumscribed purpose. By statute, ours is not the privilege of voting the supplies or refusing the supplies. We have been given the very doubtful privilege of offering random remarks on the subject. The theory is that these observations are taken very careful note of by the Hon'ble Ministers concerned. But to our utter misfortune we find that the Hon'ble Minister in charge, namely, the Finance Minister is conspicuous by his absence: when this point was raised yesterday another Hon'ble Minister said that he was taking note of what the honourable members were saying: but today that particular Hon'ble Minister also is conspicuous by his absence. Yesterday when a weighty speech was being made by the leader of the Congress Group, I called your attention to the fact that the Hon'ble Finance Minister was absent and, Sir, you were pleased to say that the Hon'ble Minister concerned left the Chamber with your permission to say his prayer. But, Sir, I can say from

personal knowledge that one does not take more than 20 minutes to say the midday prayer. The Hon'ble Minister may take half an hour or three-quarters of an hour to say his prayer and after that he could have returned to the Chamber; but, Sir, as you know, for the rest of yesterday he was absent from the House. If he had taken leave from you for a particular purpose, after he had finished that purpose he might have come back: he did not do so. Today also he is absent. Do the Ministers attach any importance to the observations made in this House? Are we not slighted, neglected and ignored by them? What else can be the meaning of this attitude? Is it not waste of public money and time if the Ministers do not think it necessary to be present when their subjects are being discussed? Then, Sir, they say that they are taking notes of what we are saying. But I find none is taking notes today: everyone is dosing. I do not mean any disrespect to any one, but I am only stating a fact which is clear to every observer in this House. That is why I began by saying that it is neither pleasant nor stimulating to have to take part in a discussion of the budget in this House.

Now, Sir, in this connection may I just offer a few remarks which occurred to me by observing the demeanour of the Hon'ble Ministers sitting in this House. I have noticed the way in which they return answers to our questions. The other day the Leader of the Opposition was constrained to raise a point of privilege arising out of an answer of a particular Minister. The Hon'ble Minister concerned was pleased to observe in answer that he knew his duty. That observation of the Hon'ble Minister set in motion a train of thoughts in my mind. Here we are supposed to be enjoying Provincial Autonomy and here are the Council of Ministers composed of people who were returned by popular suffrage to the Legislature. When a particular Minister is asked to reply to a supplementary question he says that he knows his duty: we need not bother about it: we may mind our own business. This is an answer, Sir, of an Hon'ble Minister who was returned by popular suffrage and who is supposed to be a responsible Minister. I feel that during this war time the blessed Defence of India Act and blesseder rules made thereunder have proved a veritable God-send to the Hon'ble Ministers. The Hon'ble Ministers are enjoying autocrat powers and autocracy is being bred in them by the exercise of powers for which they have no responsibility. The members of the Legislature may say whatever they want to say, the Hon'ble Ministers are perfectly safe and comfortable in their seats: that is the mentality with which they are working.

Then, Sir, another Hon'ble Minister, to wit, the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Industries Department in answer to a supplementary question put by me the other day as to what arrangements had been made to ensure that standard cloth would be sold only to the poorer classes, as stated in his written answer, said "that is a matter of action". His attitude was —"you, members of the Council, how do you dare to ask to know what action we take. You should be content with your inaction. You, legislators, how have you the hardihood to ask what action we are going to take?"

Well, Sir, that has been the mentality bred in the Hon'ble Ministers, supposed to be popular and responsible to the Legislature. I feel that they have an autocratic mentality generated in them. Thanks to the blessed Defence of India Act and blesseder rules framed under it.

Now, Sir, the present Ministry, which has styled itself, as the Progressive Coalition Ministry, ushered into existence in the month of November, 1941, under the flourish of trumpets and showers of blessings from many unexpected quarters. It was freely said at that time that millennium had at last dawned upon Bengal, that Hindu Mahasabha people, the Congressmen, Muslims, all joined hands and that now the real National Government had been formed in this province, progressive legislations, ameliorative legislations would be introduced for the good of the people and also that all good and desirable things would flow in torrents from the Ministry. The previous Ministry which had been functioning for over 4 years, well, that was also a Coalition Ministry but by contrast this present Ministry had been called Progressive and probably it was implied that the other Ministry was retrogressive. Well, this present Ministry is progressive in many respects, no doubt. I am coming to that later on. For the present I ask what about those grandiose promises made to the people? The leader of the present Ministry had been the leader of the past Ministry. He has been a Congressman, he has been a Krishak-Proja leader, he has been a Muslim leaguer, he has been a progressive Muslim leaguer. Well, when such a person with so many qualifications is at the head of the present Ministry certainly it must be considered that millennium has dawned upon Bengal! But what is the output of this Ministry during the last 15 months that they have been in office? We of the Muslim League, in the Opposition, knew from the very beginning that this particular Ministry composed of different desparate elements have joined for a particular purpose and that purpose was to keep down the progressive and ameliorative legislations for the masses, legislations which were being attempted by the previous Ministry. They, the present Ministry, are of one opinion that all progressive, ameliorative and necessary legislations should be held in abeyance. They have united and succeeded marvellously in this respect. Take for example, the Secondary Education Bill. The minds of the Muslim community have been very much exercised over this Bill. Promises after promises have been given by the present Ministry that they would bring in the Bill. But they trotted out this plea and that plea and their real intention was not to proceed with the Bill at all. They are determined not to proceed with this Bill. Well, Sir, the reason is obvious.

Then, Sir, take the Floud Commission's recommendations. Opinion of both the Houses of Legislature with regard to those recommendations was sought and be cured. We were told that the new Ministry would shortly issue a statement embodying its proposals about the Floud Commission's recommendations. But what do we find? We find a novel procedure by which the Chief Minister in order to lull public opinion to sleep published a statement in his personal capacity giving his personal views about the recommendations. This is a novel procedure indeed! The present

Ministry definitely promised to the Legislature that Government would give its own definite proposals on the Floud Commission's report. But instead of that the Prime Minister gives out his personal views in the shape of a statement in his personal capacity. Is this not the breach of that promise which was given to the Legislature? I know, Sir, that this Ministry is not working for the masses but really labouring for privileged classes and vested interests. This Ministry cannot be expected to take up any ameliorative measures and pursue them with diligence. Sir, the permanent settlement has become a veritable incubus to the people of this province, and it is clear to the meanest intelligence that unless this permanent settlement is done away with Bengal's lot cannot be improved. That is the opinion of all impartial people who have thought over the problem. I know that it is useless to expect from this Government definite proposals on the recommendations of the Floud Commission. This Ministry have not the courage to make up its mind and to say that they do not accept the recommendations.

Sir, you are aware that there are certain pieces of legislation on which the Hon'ble High Court has been giving its rulings almost every day. They are of great importance to the masses of Bengal. The High Court has criticised the Bengal Money-lenders Act, and has pointed out certain flaws in the Act. But I do not find any sign that these rulings have been noticed by the Ministry. Then, Sir, may I refer to another piece of Act in which the Muslims particularly are vitally interested? I refer to the Bengal Wakf Act, 1934, Bengal Act XIII of 1934. This Act has been in operation since 21st March, 1936. It has been in operation for close upon seven years. During this pretty long period, many defects have been brought to light in the administration of this Act which require to be removed if the Act is to serve to any extent the purpose which the Legislature had in view. The Hon'ble Chief Minister was in charge of Education at that time, and I may tell the House that whoever is in charge of portfolio of education has also been in charge of Wakfs. The Board of Wakfs insisted that certain amendments were necessary to the Act. As a matter of fact the Board had submitted to the Chief Minister a draft Bill suggesting certain amendments which they considered necessary if the Act were to be properly administered. But nothing has been done in the direction of bringing in legislation by the Chief Minister. He is no longer in charge of Wakfs, as he is not now Education Minister. Will the present Education Minister care to take up the matter? I have not noticed any desire on his part so far that he is aware of the need for amendments to that Act. I say, Sir, from very intimate personal knowledge that the administration of the Act has revealed serious defects and omissions which require to be removed at once. The Act is not fulfilling its purpose and the community is suffering and the better administration of wakf properties which was the end and aim of the Act is not being realised.

(At this stage the honourable member reached the time-limit but was allowed to finish.)

On the subject of the vexed question of procession with music before places of worship we were told that the present Ministry would bring forward a very comprehensive and satisfactory solution. Sir, we were given large hopes, but, Sir, has that hope been fulfilled? On the contrary, as a token of fulfilment of that promise we were presented with one distressing incident very soon after this Progressive Coalition Ministry came into power. In the town of Mymensingh there is a Jumma mosque. It is a fact that at no recorded time was a procession with music ever allowed to be taken out before that mosque. But the first thing that this Progressive Ministry did was to allow a Hindu procession with music under armed assistance to be taken out before that mosque. Sir, I may repeat that at no recorded time was any procession with music allowed to pass that mosque. That, Sir, is perhaps a token of the fulfilment of the hopes that were held out!

Then, Sir, it is well known how Muslims recently were done to death at Kishoreganj. Perhaps you will stop me, Sir, saying that the matter is *sub judice* although I have not been able up to now to understand how the action of the officers concerned in the firing could be *sub judice*. Now the Leader of the Opposition tells me that all these cases have been withdrawn. Of course we knew that it was all a mere eye wash. At that time the feelings ran high and these cases had to be trotted out before the House in order to avoid and evade an adjournment motion we had tabled and when that crisis passed the cases were withdrawn! The Ministry has been very zealous in prosecuting and persecuting Musalmans, I mean Musalmans belonging to and sympathising with the Muslim League, and that means practically the entire Muslim community. They may have disagreed about many things among themselves but in this respect they are in perfect agreement. They have taken action, they have been delighted to take action against people who have even the least sympathy with the Muslim League. The Muslim League organisations are an anathema to the members of the present Coalition Party. We know how the Muslims are being persecuted, how Muslim officers suspected on most flimsy grounds of having any sympathy with the Muslim League are being transferred from the stations and how the usefulness of these officers is being destroyed by the nefarious actions of the present petty-minded Ministry. Sir, another noticeable factor in this connection is the elimination and suppression of all Muslim League Chairmen of District Boards of Bengal. This fact is so well known that I need not dilate upon this at length.

Sir, I now come to certain provisions in the budget, my above observations so far have been with regard to the conduct, motive and activity of the Ministry.

I find that in the budget a sum of Rs. 70,000 has been provided for "Rewards" under the head "Industry". Sir, we were under the impression that rewards, unnamed and unnameable, were so long the exclusive preserve of the Police Department. So far as the Industries Department is concerned, we have not been given any light upon this point of "Reward" which is to be bestowed no doubt upon some fortunate people. It would

be a great kindness indeed if the Minister concerned condescended to give an explanation of what is the destination of this "Reward." Then one notices that a sum of Rs. 70,000 has been provided for agricultural loans. This has given rise to certain thoughts in my mind. Sir, provision of cheap agricultural credit is a crying necessity in this land. The present Ministry which came into power with a loudly proclaimed desire to do good to the people—what has it done for the people by way of providing cheap agricultural credit? They could only think of this palliative, this agricultural loan. We know that this agricultural loan has more snares than good in it. Could it not think out any scheme for providing cheap agricultural credit for the countryside? Sir, I come from a district Khulna, which is malarious and malaria in a virulent form is raging in the villages there. But there is a lamentable shortage of quinine. The Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Forest Department the other day told us in answer to a question about the shortage of quinine that we should have to wait for the shortage to be appreciably removed, which gave us cold comfort. Are we to wait indefinitely and are the Government to watch as a helpless watcher the ravages of malaria?

Then, Sir, through you I wish to draw the attention of the members of the House and of the Government to the problem of Muslim education in Bengal. There are certain officers employed by Government to look after Muslim education in Bengal—I mean the Assistant Director of Muhammadan Education, the Inspector of Muhammadan Education and Inspectress of Muhammadan Education,—so far so good. But has Government thought that the activities of Special Officers will come to naught unless special and separate funds are provided for the furtherance of the Muslim education? Special funds have been provided for the maintenance of these officers but for their activities no special funds have been provided, they come from the general fund. They do not get any special grant for the Muslim education. No separate allocation has been made for the education of Muslim boys and girls. Just now I have particularly in mind the Muslim girls' education when I say this. The Muslim community has made some advance now with regard to the education of their boys and Muslim girls' education is, however, sadly lagging behind. For want of special funds many schools cannot be aided: for lack of funds many schools have closed down. So what is the good of having Special Officers unless you earmark special funds for Muslim education?

Now, Sir, coming to the grant allotted on account of the Civil Supply Department, I may say that rice cannot be had for less than Rs. 15 a maund in Calcutta and for less than Rs. 13 in the villages. I know very intimately the condition prevailing in villages in my part of the country. I know the plight of the poor people of the rural areas. It is now the middle of the month of *Falgoon* when the price of rice is so high and we do not know what will happen with the advancement of the summer season and the onset of the rains. In answer to a question this morning the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Co-operative Department said that there is

a huge deficit of rice supply: the Hon'ble Minister has himself admitted it and said that the officers of the Civil Supply Department are very seriously thinking over the matter. In my supplementary question I drew attention of the Government to the fact that the situation was very serious but I regret to say that Government could not indicate a definite and hopeful line of action: they have no idea when and how a remedy will be available. They have not shown any complaint in dealing with the situation. If they think that the situation is hopeless and is beyond their power let them say so, they should not leave us in any delusion. But the Government are befooling us and saying that they are doing their duty. But I submit, Sir, they are not doing their duty. I want to know whether it is not their duty to give the people of Bengal immediate relief. I want to know whether the food situation in Bengal is not dangerous; and whether it does not require immediate and effective attention? I shudder to think, Sir, what the situation will become if things go on in this way.

Mr. KADER BAKSH: Mr. Deputy President, I join issue (*sic.*) with my honourable friend Mr. Nur Ahmed who has rightly said that the budget this year is most discouraging. We do not criticise the budget for the sake of criticism only but for drawing the attention of the Government to the present state of things. I had no intention to take any part in the budget discussion but I am compelled to do so and to make some observations regarding the policy of the Government. Knowing full well as I do that having expressed my views on the floor of this House I shall be persecuted as I have been persecuted, I make these observations because I think it is my duty as representative of the people to make these observations. Sir, it is not only disgraceful but it is most lamentable that any particular individual should be persecuted on account of his having some political views. There are different people belonging to different parties in the whole world and they are never persecuted for holding some political veiws. But that is the policy which has been ruthlessly followed by the present Ministry. I do not want to give any instances because it is my own case. I can only say that the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Hashem Ali Khan knows something about this matter. He has personal experience about this matter. But be that as it may, Sir, you know fully well and as my friend Mr. Quasem just now said that several District Boards have been superseded. Attempts were even made also to bring in no-confidence motions against members of several municipalities and the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Hashem Ali Khan knows fully well that several municipalities have been superseded very recently and why? Because the Chairmen or Vice-Chairmen happened to be members of the Muslim League. This, Sir, is the policy which is being ruthlessly pursued by the present Ministry. Everybody knows that interference in the election of local bodies has been a daily occurrence and why? Because the present Ministry take interest in some local bodies. They are doing this deliberately and with a motive I do not want to say what that motive is as it is apparent to you all. Sir, there are some reserved seats for Muhammadans in some municipalities but now Hindu Mahasabha men are being pushed up for election to those seats. It happened in my own district and

in my own ward, let anybody deny this. But, Sir, we are prepared for this. I know what will be the consequence of my speech in this House, but I shall not go back.

Then, there is another matter. I will now deal with certain matters with regard to foodstuffs. As regards "Education" my honourable friend Khan Sahib Abul Quasem has dealt with that. I do not want to repeat that. I want to say a few words with regard to control of foodstuffs, kerosene and other daily necessities of life and something about this "Grow More Food" campaign. I may simply say that this campaign is an insult to the people themselves. How can we grow more food? Unless there is some plan, how the "Grow More Food" scheme can be carried on successfully? But there has been no suggestion, no scheme, no plan behind this "Grow More Food" cry. It is like a distant cry which has arisen from the wilderness. Now, Sir, in my district of Dinajpur, everybody says that it is a granary of the province of Bengal and it is exactly so. But from this district lakhs of bags of paddy are being exported every month leaving nothing for the people of the district to eat. This draining of foodstuff is being done by Government agents and also by people from Murshidabad, Krishnagore and other places. I have my personal experience in this matter. Sir, if we are not allowed to keep for our own consumption the food that we have been growing already, what is the use of accelerating the growth of foodstuff? How can the people be encouraged to grow more food if they are not permitted to eat the food they grow? There cannot be any encouragement for growing more food unless this huge exportation is stopped. Sir, the perpetual draining of foodstuff from one district to other parts of the province is absolutely unreasonable and unfavourable. Now, Sir, the District Agricultural Officer of our place does not appear to have any knowledge about agriculture whom I may describe as a white elephant. He cannot give any plan or any suggestion as to how to grow food. We cannot get any rice from him. He is absolutely of no help to the people for the purpose of growing any kind of food. Sir, I had a discussion with the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Co-operative Societies over this question for some length of time and he promised that he will take much more care with regard to the supply of foodstuff; but nothing has been done so far, as I do not find any plan or any scheme. Now, Sir, with regard to another point—Hindu-Muslim unity. One lakh of rupees had been budgeted for this work in the current year's budget to bring about unity between the Hindus and Muslims and out of this amount Rs. 15,000 have been spent up till now.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Nothing has been spent.

Mr. KADER BAKSH: Why, Sir, nothing has been spent? We are very much eager, Sir, to see that the existing inharmonious feeling between the Hindus and the Muslims is done away with as soon as possible. Why this money which was earmarked for this purpose has not been utilised? Why no explanation has been given for this negligence

on the part of Government? May I ask, Sir, why no attempt was made by the present Ministry to bring about this unity? Now, from this attitude of mind on the part of the present Ministry, it is clear that none of the Ministers likes that Hindu-Muslim unity should take place. There must be some ulterior motive behind this attitude of mind on the part of the Ministers. Otherwise why Government have not given any suggestion for the solution of this most important problem. The result is, Sir, that the feeling between these two communities is getting strained every day.

Sir, I would in the end appeal to the Hon'ble Ministers to remember that what I have said is not in a spirit of criticism but I have said all that I have said in the nature of an appeal to them to do all in their power to bring about amity between the two communities in Bengal, and also to arrange for proper control with regard to the distribution of foodstuffs. I have only put before them some facts, I have not exaggerated them in the least—hard facts they may be, unpalatable facts they may be, but they are true nonetheless. I would again appeal to the members of the Cabinet to look closely at the question of Hindu-Muslim unity, and also at the question of interference by members of the Cabinet in the elections to the local bodies, and also regarding certain officers. My friend has said and rightly said that the present Cabinet suspects some of the prominent Muslim officers in this province as Muslim Leaguers and on account of that idea, certainly a false idea, some of these officers have been unjustly treated and are being unjustly treated even now; Sir, this is not mere hearsay; this is my personal knowledge.

I again appeal to the Ministers that no particular individual, whether a Muslim, or a Hindu or a European, whoever, he may be, may be oppressed or prosecuted or harassed on account of possessing certain political views. Then, Sir, with regard to the "control" prices, the control at present being exercised is absolutely meaningless.

With these observations I appeal to the Ministry, I appeal to the Hon'ble Mr. Barman and to the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Hashem Ali Khan, for they are the only two Hon'ble Ministers now present in the Treasury Bench—I would appeal to them to see that the procedure which has been followed by them up till now may not be continued in the future but that they should deal with the public and their officers apart from considerations of party politics.

Maulana MOHAMMAD AKRAM KHAN : মাননীয় Deputy President, Sir, বক্তৃতা দিবার ইচ্ছা আমার ছিল না কিন্তু দেখছি জাতির ২৫ মিনিট মূল্যবান সময় নষ্ট হয়ে যাচ্ছে আর হয় ত এই houseএর ক্ষমতা একদিনের জন্য নষ্ট হয়ে যাবে। কাজেই এই হিসাবে দুই-একটা কথা নিবেদন করতে বাধ্য হচ্ছি। আমার আলোচনা বাজেট প্রসঙ্গে, মন্ত্রীদের প্রসঙ্গে নয়। মন্ত্রীদের কার্য্যাবলী মধ্যাহ্ন সূর্য্যবৎ দেদীপ্যমান কিন্তু তাহা আমার বক্তব্যের বিষয় নহে। একদিন কানে শুনেছিলাম বাজেট সম্বন্ধে দার্শনিক আলোচনা করবার অনুরোধ করা হয়েছে। আমি ইংরাজী দর্শনের বড় বেশী ধার ধারি না। মুসলমান এবং হিন্দু দর্শনশাস্ত্রের

সামান্য কিছু দেখাশুনার অভ্যাস আমার আছে। কিন্তু দর্শনের জন্য দৃষ্টির আর দৃষ্টির জন্য দ্রষ্টার দরকার। আমি সেই দ্রষ্টা হিসাবে দু'একটি কথা বলতে চাই। সেটা বাজেট আলোচনা সম্বন্ধে খুব অনুকূল না হলেও প্রতিকূল হবে না।

প্রথমতঃ মন্ত্রী মহাশয়দের বিরুদ্ধে গুরুতর অভিযোগ আনা হয়েছে যে তাঁরা খাদ্য-সমস্যার সমাধান করতে পারেন নি। আমার মনে হয় যে মন্ত্রী মহাশয়েরা খাদ্য-সমস্যা সমাধানের যে উপায় নির্দ্ধারণ করেছেন সেটা বাস্তবিকই অতি দূরদর্শিতার পরিচয়। এই houseএর অদার্শনিক মেম্বর যাঁরা, তাঁরা হয়ত এটা লক্ষ্য করতে পারেন নাই কিন্তু যাঁদের পাশ্চাত্য এবং প্রাচ্য দর্শন সম্বন্ধে অভিজ্ঞতা আছে তাঁরা বুঝতে পেরেছেন মন্ত্রী মহাশয়েরা উপযুক্ত কাজ করেছেন দেশের অসাধারণ মঙ্গল সাধন করেছেন অন্ন-সমস্যা সম্বন্ধে উপেক্ষা করে। আজ এখানে কামিনী বাবু উপস্থিত নেই। কয়েকদিন পূর্ব্বে তাঁর সঙ্গে আমার আলোচনা হয়েছিল একটি গুরুতর বিষয় সম্বন্ধে। সে বিষয়টি হচ্ছে জ্যোতিষ। আমি বললাম কলির অবসান হয়েছে, উনি বললেন না কলির অবসান হয় নি। দু'একটা যুক্তি-প্রমাণও আমি পেশ করেছিলাম। আমার মতে কলিযুগ কলিযুগ করে দেশে যে একটা অসঙ্গত মনস্তত্ত্বের সৃষ্টি হয়ে গেছে তার প্রতিকার আবশ্যক। কোন অন্যায় কাজের প্রতিবাদ করতে গেলে লোকে অমনি বলে উঠে কলিযুগেতে এই রকমই হবেই।

কলিযুগের অবসান হলে মানুষের মনস্তত্ত্বেরও গুরুতর পরিবর্ত্তন হবে সত্যযুগের ভাবধারা মানুষ আবার গ্রহণ করবে। মন্ত্রী মহাশয়েরাও স্বীকার করিয়াছেন যে কলিযুগের অবসান হয়েছে। তাঁরা বুঝতে পেরেছেন কেননা তাঁরা দূরদর্শী। অনেক বিষয়ে অভিজ্ঞতা লাভের সুযোগ তাঁদের আছে। আমরা সাধারণ চোখে যা দেখতে পাই না তা তাঁরা দেখতে পান। তাঁরা এটা বুঝতে পেরেছেন বলেই আমার মনে হয় মানবজাতির বিশেষতঃ ভারতীয় মহামানবের মনস্তত্ত্বে পরিবর্ত্তন আনবার জন্য, দেশের অন্ন-সমস্যাকে তাঁরা উপেক্ষা করেছেন। কারণ শাস্ত্রে আছে—কলিযুগের মানব "অন্নগত প্রাণাঃ" আর সত্যযুগের যেহেতু আবির্ভাব হচ্ছে সুতরাং এখনকার মানুষ হবে "ধর্ম্মগত প্রাণাঃ"—এখন অন্ন খেয়ে বাঁচবার দরকার নাই। ধর্ম্ম খেয়ে, ন্যায় খেয়ে, জ্ঞান খেয়ে, দর্শন খেয়ে খেয়ে মানুষকে বাঁচতে হবে। সেইজন্য সত্যযুগ আবার অবিলম্বে ফিরে আসে, লোকেরা যাতে নিজেদের আর কলিযুগের জীব বলে মনে না করে, মানুষ নিজেকে "অন্নগত প্রাণাঃ" মনে না করে "ধর্ম্মগত প্রাণাঃ" মনে করে, আমাদের মাননীয় মন্ত্রী মহাশয়েরা সেই চেষ্টাই এযাবৎ করে এসেছেন এবং চেষ্টা করবার জন্য আমি তাঁদের বিশেষরূপে ধন্যবাদ দিচ্ছি।

তারপর অনেকে অভিযোগ করে বলেছেন দেশে মহা মন্বন্তর উপস্থিত হয়েছে। কিন্তু এ'ত সনাতন নিয়ম। মনুর অন্তরে যুগের অন্তর আর মনুর অন্তর-মন্বন্তর। সুতরাং কলিযুগের অবসানের ও সত্যযুগের আবির্ভাবের সূচনায় মন্বন্তর তো হবেই। সুতরাং ভ্রান্ত মানব! এজন্য দুঃখিত না হয়ে আনন্দিত হও। কারণ স্বর্গরাজ্য দুনিয়ার মাটির উপর হুর হুর করে নেমে আসতে আরম্ভ করেছে। আর আমাদের মন্ত্রী মহাশয়েরা তারই সহায়তা করেছেন। সুতরাং তাঁরা অশেষ কৃতজ্ঞতা লাভের অধিকারী। মন্ত্রী মহাশয়দের বিরুদ্ধে দ্বিতীয় অভিযোগ হয়েছে জ্বালানীর অভাব। কয়লা মফঃস্বলে পাওয়া যায় না। এদিকে বন-জঙ্গল থেকে কাঠ কেটে আনাও নৌকার অভাবে লোকের পক্ষে অসম্ভব হয়েছে। কিন্তু আমার মতে এর জন্য অভিযোগের পরিবর্ত্তে মন্ত্রী মহাশয়দের অভিনন্দন জানানই মেম্বরদের উচিত ছিল। আমি মোল্লা মানুষ, আধুনিক বই কেতাবের ধার বড় একটা ধারি না। তবে বিশেষজ্ঞদের মুখে শুনেছি—অনাবৃষ্টিই হচ্ছে বাংলাদেশের অন্নাভাবের প্রধান কারণ। আবার এই অনাবৃষ্টির প্রধান কারণ

হচ্ছে প্রকৃতিদত্ত বন-জঙ্গলগুলির বিনাশ। কাজেই এই অনাবৃষ্টি নিবারণের জন্য বন-জঙ্গলগুলি রক্ষা করার দরকার। আমার মনে হয়, দেশের অন্নাভাবের চিরস্থায়ী প্রতিকার করার মহৎ উদ্দেশ্যে প্রণোদিত হয়েই মন্ত্রী মহাশয় দেশরক্ষার এই পরোক্ষ ব্যবস্থা অবলম্বন করেছেন।

তৃতীয় কথা হচ্ছে কেরোসিন নিয়ে অভিযোগ করা হয়েছে। সূর্য্যাস্তের পূর্ব্বে লোকে ভাত খায় এইরূপ ব্যবস্থা শাস্ত্রে আছে। বহুদিন পরে মাননীয় মন্ত্রী মহাশয়েরা যে এইরূপ ব্যবস্থার আয়োজন করেছেন, এদেশে আবার সূর্য্যাস্তের পূর্ব্বে ভাত খাওয়ার প্রথা আরম্ভ হয়েছে এটা যুগ পরিবর্ত্তনের সূচনা। শ্রীভগবান সূর্য্যদেবের সৃষ্টি করেছেন, তাঁর উজ্জ্বল কিরণে দিবাভাগে মানুষ নিজেদের সব কর্ত্তব্য সম্পাদন করে নেবে এই উদ্দেশ্যে। সূর্য্যদেব অস্তে গেলে রাত্রে লোকেরা বিশ্রাম করবে। সেই সনাতন নীতির পুনঃ প্রবর্ত্তনের ব্যবস্থা করে মন্ত্রী মহাশয়েরা আমাদের কৃতজ্ঞতা অর্জন করেছেন।

তারপর আমাদের দেশের লোককে একান্নী হতে হবে। একবার মাত্র অন্ন ভোজন করতে হবে। সকাল থেকে চা, টোষ্ট আটা. রুটি খেয়ে খেয়ে আমাদের দেশের লোকের পাকস্থলী মনস্থলী এবং মস্তিষ্ক নষ্ট হয়ে গেছে। মন্ত্রী মহাশয়েরা চান যে লোক একান্নী হউক। একান্ন ভোজন করে আমাদের দেশে ভীম এবং অর্জুনের সৃষ্টি হয়েছিল। মন্ত্রী মহাশয়েরাও চান যে আবার আমাদের দেশে ভীমার্জ্জুনের সৃষ্টি হউক। আবার ভারতবর্ষ জয়যাত্রার পথে অগ্রসর হউক। এই সাধু সঙ্কল্পের জন্য আমি মন্ত্রী মহাশয়গণকে আবার হৃদয়ের কৃতজ্ঞতা জানাচ্ছি।

মন্ত্রী মহাশয়দের এই মহিমার আরও একটা সুন্দর দিক আছে। কামিনী বাবু অভিযোগ করেছেন—জ্বালানী কাঠের অভাবে নিজেদের ভিটাবাড়ী ও বাগান-বাগিচার গাছপালা কেটে কাজ চালাতে তাঁরা বাধ্য হচ্ছেন। কত বড় সুব্যবস্থা মন্ত্রী মহাশয়েরা করেছেন তা আমি সকল মেম্বরদের ভাল করে চিন্তা করে দেখবার জন্য বিনীত অনুরোধ করছি। পৌরাণিক ইতিহাস যাঁরা পড়েছেন তাঁরা জানেন পুরাকালে ঋষিপুত্রেরা বনে যেয়ে কাষ্ঠ আহরণ কর্ত্তেন এবং সেই কাষ্ঠের আগুনে স্বপাক ভোজন কর্ত্তেন। আরও একটা কথা আছে—মন্ত্রী মহাশয়দের সমস্ত সুব্যবস্থার কথা বলে শেষ করা যায় না। মাননীয় ডেপুটি প্রেসিডেণ্ট মহাশয় যদি আমাকে দুই ঘণ্টা সময় দেন তাহ'লে সব কথা হয়ত বলতে পারা যায়। যাই হোক আজ আমি শ্রোতাহীন সভায় শক্তিহীন বক্তার মত বলে বোধ হয় আপনাদের সময় নষ্ট করছি।

সমুদ্রের উপকূলস্থ খুলনা, ২৪-পরগণা প্রভৃতি জেলার গ্রামগুলির অবস্থা আপনারা অনেকে জানেন। মধ্যাহ্ন মার্ত্তণ্ডের প্রচণ্ড আলোকও এই গ্রামগুলিতে প্রবেশ লাভের অধিকারী নয়। সূর্য্যালোকের প্রবেশের অধিকার সেখানে নেই। বায়ু প্রবেশের অধিকার সেখানে নেই। তার ফলে হয়েছে মশা আর ম্যালেরিয়া। সুতরাং বাংলার এই ভয়ঙ্করতম অভিশাপটিকে বিনষ্ট কর্ত্তে হলে গ্রামগুলির মধ্যে ঢুকিয়ে দিতে হবে আলো আর বাতাস আর সেজন্য নিঃশেষে পরিষ্কার করে ফেলতে হবে পল্লীবঙ্গের গাছপালা ও বন-জঙ্গলগুলিকে। তাহলে মশাও যাবে ম্যালেরিয়াও যাবে। আমাদের সহৃদয় মন্ত্রী মহাশয়েরা এই ব্যবস্থাই পরোক্ষভাবে করেছেন। এইভাবে বাংলার গ্রামে গ্রামে বন-জঙ্গল যাবে, বাংলার গ্রামে গ্রামে বাতাস অপ্রতিহতভাবে প্রবাহিত হবে। বাংলার সবচেয়ে বড় অভিশাপ দূর হয়ে যাবে, সেইজন্য আমি বলতে চাই মন্ত্রী মহাশয়েরা এক উদ্দেশ্য নয় বহু উদ্দেশ্য নিয়ে এই ব্যবস্থা অবলম্বন করেছেন।

আমার নিবেদন, যাঁরা মন্ত্রী মহাশয়দের প্রতিকূল আলোচনা করছেন তাঁদের মনে রাখা উচিত যে আমরা উচ্চ পরিষদের সদস্য, আমাদের মনটাও খুব উচ্চ হওয়া উচিত। নিম্ন পরিষদে এক রকম অবস্থা উচ্চ পরিষদে আর এক রকম অবস্থা। আমরা বয়োবৃদ্ধ ভবসাগরের পরপারের

যাত্রী। আমাদের পরিষদ প্রত্যেক session আরম্ভ হওয়ার সঙ্গে সঙ্গেই কোন-না-কোন মেম্বরের তিরোধানে শোক প্রকাশের জন্য একদিন বন্ধ করতে হয়। এটা উচচ পরিষদ। সেই-জন্য আমাদের মন উচচ রাখার দরকার। অন্যথায় মন্ত্রী মহাশয়দের দোষটাই আমরা দেখব শুধু তার ভিতরের সত্য সুন্দরকে আমরা দেখতে পাব না। একটা উদাহরণ আমি দিচ্ছি। শ্রীরাম-চন্দ্র এবং লক্ষমণ বনবাসে গিয়ে উপস্থিত হয়েছিলেন মানস সরোবর তীরে। সেখানে একটা কাণা বক শেওলার উপর দিয়ে খুব সন্তর্পণে হেটে যাচ্ছিল। তা দেখে লক্ষমণ বললেন বকটা কি দুষ্টু, ধীরে ধীরে পা ফেলছে যেন মাছেরা কিছু বুঝতে না পারে। কি গভীর তার ধূর্ত্তামি। শ্রীরামচন্দ্র বললেন না বক শেওলার উপর দিয়ে গমন করছে, অতি সন্তর্পণে পা ফেলছে, পাছে বেচারা মাছের ঘাড়ে পা পড়ে। পা পড়লে নখ ফুটে তারা কষ্ট পাবে। সেইজন্য লক্ষমণ বল্লেন—বক: পরমধার্ম্মিক:। কিন্তু রামচন্দ্র নিজের সদ্ভাবের প্রতিধ্বনি মুক্তকণ্ঠে ঘোষণা কল্লেন—বক: পরমধার্ম্মিক:। তাই বলছিলাম দ্রষ্টার ও তাঁর দর্শনভঙ্গিমার তারতম্যের ফলে দৃষ্টিরও তারতম্য ঘটে। শ্রীরামচন্দ্র একভাবে দর্শন করেছিলেন লক্ষণ আর একভাবে দেখেছেন। সেইজন্য মন্ত্রী মহাশয়দের সমালোচনা প্রসঙ্গে আমি বলি "বক: পরম: ধার্ম্মিক:"। তাঁরা মানবত্তার জন্য বাংলার মঙ্গলের জন্য যেসব মহান কাজ করেছেন সেগুলি চিন্তা করে আমি আমার অন্তরের অন্তঃস্তল থেকে মন্ত্রী মহাশয়দের সাধুবাদ জ্ঞাপন করছি।

Change of programme and day.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, order. The desire of the House as regards the change of programme of business and the days of sitting, I mean sitting on the Friday and the Saturday, had been conveyed to the authorities. A reply has been received to the following effect, namely, that it is now too late to alter the programme, but His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to consider the suggestions about the allotment of an extra day for the transaction of non-official business. So I am afraid there will not be any change in the programme of business for the next Friday and Saturday.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: Then are we to understand that the Council will sit on next Saturday?

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Yes, because the date has been fixed by His Excellency the Governor in his individual judgment.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: But, Sir, has it not been done on the recommendation and advice of the Council of Ministers?

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: That I cannot say. I may read out the letter if you want me to do so. I would therefore now like to know the opinion of the House at what time they would like to sit on Saturday next.

Rai Bahadur KESHAB CHANDRA BANERJEE: I am informed that the other House too is sitting on Saturday.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: If there is no objection we may sit as usual at 1-30 p.m. on Saturday also.

Rai Bahadur KESHAB CHANDRA BANERJEE: Yes, Sir.

Mr. W. B. C. LAIDLAW: We would rather sit in the morning, preferably to the afternoon, on Saturday.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I may say that the Lower House is meeting that day from 10-30 a.m. to 12-30 p.m. The Council may therefore sit from 9 a.m. to 10-30 a.m.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Only one and a half hours?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Or from 8-30 to 10-30 a.m.

Rai Bahadur KESHAB CHANDRA BANERJEE: That would be too early.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Do I understand Mr. Laidlaw to say that the European Group would prefer the morning?

Mr. W. B. C. LAIDLAW: Yes.

Bhan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: This side is also agreeable to the morning sitting on Saturday, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Rai Bahadur KESHAB CHANDRA BANERJEE: But the Lower House will be sitting up to 12-30 p.m.!

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: What is the suggestion of the Hon'ble Mr. Hashem Ali Khan?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: My suggestion is 8-30 a.m. to 10-30 a.m.

Mr. AMULYADHAN ROY: It is impossible, Sir, to sit at 8-30 a.m. in the morning on Saturday.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: 8-30 to 10-30 would be better.

May I in this connection enquire, Sir, as to whether any date has been fixed for the debate on the Food and the Jute Question?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: That will be settled next week.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: I hope in the meantime the House will not be prorogued!

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT (after consultation with the Leader of the House): The House stands adjourned till 1-30 p.m. tomorrow.

Adjournment.

The Council then adjourned till 1-30 p.m. on Thursday, the 25th February, 1943.

Members absent.

The following members were absent from the meeting held on the 24th February, 1943:—

(1) Mr. Altaf Ali.

(2) Khan Bahadur Rezzaqul Haider Chowdhury.

(3) Mr. Narendra Chandra Datta.

(4) Mr. Kamini Kumar Dutta.

(5) Mr. J. McFarlane.

(6) Mr. Naresh Nath Mookerjee.

(7) Khan Bahadur Ataur Rahman.

(8) Mr. J. B. Ross.

(9) Mr. Sachindra Narayan Sanyal.

(10) Khan Bahadur M. Shamsuzzoha.

(11) Sir Bijoy Prasad Singh Roy.

BENGAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DEBATES

First Session, 1943—No. 8.

THE COUNCIL met in the Legislative Chamber of the Legislative Building, Calcutta, on Thursday, the 25th February, 1943, at 1-30 p.m., being the 8th day of the first session of 1943, pursuant to section 62(2)(a) of the Government of India Act, 1935.

Mr. Deputy President (Khan Bahadur ABDUL HAMID CHOWDHURY) was in the Chair.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Noakhali District Board.

30. Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS (on behalf of Khan Bahadur Rezzaqul Haider Chowdhury): (a) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be pleased to state if it is a fact that the Government realised from the Noakhali District Board a sum of in excess of two per cent. on the whole amount of the District Fund, Noakhali, for such year as fixed by proviso to paragraph 3 of section 53 of the Bengal Local Self-Government Act, 1885?

(b) Is it a fact that Noakhali District Board has applied for refund of the excess amount?

(c) If so, what action has since then been taken in the matter?

MINISTER in charge of the PUBLIC HEALTH and LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu): (a) and (b) Yes.

(c) The matter is under consideration.

Murshidabad Municipality.

31. Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS (on behalf of Mr. Naresh Nath Mookerjee): (a) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be pleased to state the date fixed for the next general election of the Murshidabad Municipality?

(b) Is it a fact that the Preliminary Electoral Roll for the said Municipality had been published on the 10th of October, i.e., during the Id and Puja combined holidays?

(c) Is it a fact that in the present case the last date for filing any claim and objection to the Registering Authority in respect of the Preliminary Electoral Rolls would be on the 24th or 25th of this month, i.e., during the holidays, under rule 8 of the Election Rules?

(d) Is it a fact that there were holidays from the 9th of October to 25th of October, 1942, when most of the ratepayers were absent or were likely to be absent from the town?

(*e*) Is it a fact that by publishing the Electoral Roll during the holidays, some of the ratepayers are being debarred to exercise franchise to prefer claim or objection, as the last date for receiving such claim and objection was on the 24th or 25th of October?

(*f*) Is it a fact that under rule 3 of the Election Rules the publication of a Preliminary Electoral Roll should be made not less than 90 days before the date fixed for a general election, i.e., in the present case, on or before the 14th of December next? If so, what makes the municipality to publish the Electoral Rolls during the Puja holidays about two months before?

(*g*) Will he be pleased to state the reasons for such publication in haste, during holidays?

(*h*) Will the period from 10th of October to 25th of October be treated as "holidays" or "working days"?

(*i*) Do the Government consider the desirability of publishing the same in the month of November or in the first week of December again?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: (*a*) The 16th March, 1943.

(*b*) It was published on the 12th October, 1942, which fell during the holidays as stated.

(*c*) The last date for filing claims and objections was the 27th October, 1942, which was not during the holidays.

(*d*) There were holidays from the 9th to the 25th October, 1942. But it is reported that most of the ratepayers, who are owners of holdings and permanent inhabitants were not absent or likely to be absent during that period.

(*e*) No. The Registering Authority received a large number of claims and objection petitions which were filed on various dates between the 12th and the 27th October, 1942.

(*f*) No. The rule requires that the Preliminary Electoral Roll must be published at least 150 days before the date fixed for the general election. Therefore, in the present case the preliminary roll was required to be published on or before the 15th of October, 1942.

(*g*) Does not arise.

(*h*) The honourable member's attention is invited to the proviso to rule 3 of the Election Rules which prescribes that if any public holiday (besides Sundays) intervene the date of publication of the Preliminary Electoral Roll and the last date of filing claims or objections under rule 8, the roll shall be kept ready for inspection by the public even on those days between the hours of 10 a.m. and 5 p.m.

(*i*) Such publication would not have been in accordance with the rules which require the publication of the Preliminary Electoral Roll at least 150 days before the date of the general election.

Raja BHUPENDRA NARAYAN SINHA Bahadur, of Nashipur: *Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that people go out for excursion during the Puja holidays if the holidays are for more than one day?*

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: This is a question, Sir, which even a Minister of Government cannot answer.

Raja BHUPENDRA NARAYAN SINHA Bahadur, of Nashipur: Is it not the general idea that people go out on excursion during the Puja holidays?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: That is a matter of opinion.

Raja BHUPENDRA NARAYAN SINHA Bahadur, of Nashipur: Was there any bar to publishing the electoral roll before the Puja holidays?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: If the honourable member refers to answer (*f*), he will find it stated that the "electoral roll must be published at least 150 days before the date fixed for the general election".

Raja BHUPENDRA NARAYAN SINHA Bahadur, of Nashipur: It might be more than 150 days.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: That is so, but there was no reason to publish it so long ago before the general election although it was required under the rules.

Raja BHUPENDRA NARAYAN SINHA Bahadur, of Nashipur: Would it not have been convenient to the rate-payers if the electoral roll were published before the Puja holidays?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Not necessarily.

Bhatpara Municipality.

32. Mr. KRISHNA CHANDRA ROY CHOWDHURY: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be pleased to state if it is a fact that the Bhatpara Municipality was superseded for one year from last March, 1942?

(*b*) Was it announced by beat of drum that the next election would take place in February, 1943?

(*c*) Is it a fact that fresh orders have been issued to postpone the election *sine die*?

(*d*) Is he aware that there is a good deal of discontent among working class ratepayers over the postponement of the election?

(*e*) Is he aware that 7 out of 19 commissioners are Europeans and that a European functioned as Chairman for the last two decades?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: (*a*) and (*b*) Yes.

(*c*) The election has been postponed as it has been decided by Government to extend the period of supersession till the end of March, 1944.

(*d*) I have no such information.

(*e*) Yes.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: With reference to answer (*c*), what was the reason for Government deciding that the period of supersession should be extended?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: In the first instance, the affairs of the municipality had necessitated it. It was found that supersession for the period originally decided upon was not enough. Secondly, this particular municipality is situated in a vulnerable area and it appeared at that time that elections could not be conveniently held in that area when the elections would fall due.

Mr. LATAFAT HOSAIN: With reference to answer (*c*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is going to give an assurance that the election is going to be fixed very soon?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Elections cannot take place within 7 months of the supersession and as such even if an election is held next year, it cannot be held before November, 1944.

Mr. LATAFAT HOSAIN: May we know what difficulty has arisen for which the Government is postponing the election?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I have already explained in answer to the question put by the Leader of the Opposition that it was considered necessary to extend the period of supersession in order to reap the full bentfit of the original supersession in the interest of the rate-payers of the municipality.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: For what reason the municipality was originally superseded—was it due to financial reason or otherwise?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Well, the municipality was in a very difficult position from the financial point of view and there have been instances of corruption and also of defalcation which were subsequently investigated.

Mr. LATAFAT HOSAIN: Is it not a fact that the election is postponed only because all the money of the rate-payers is going to be spent for the war purposes and other purposes and not in the interest of the rate-payers?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: That is not so.

Defaulting zemindars.

33. Raja BHUPENDRA NARAYAN SINHA Bahadur, of Nashipur: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether it is a fact that the penalty which is charged from the defaulting zemindars depend for its sanction upon an order of the Hon'ble the Board of Revenue of 1909 and not on any law;

(*b*) whether the Land Revenue Interest Act of 1935 has not abrogated and nullified the said order of the Hon'ble the Board of Revenue of 1909; and

(*c*) if so, whether it is a fact that to put the whole matter on a legal basis the Land Revenue Interest Act was enacted?

MINISTER in charge of the REVENUE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee): (*a*) A fee for exempting an estate from revenue sale is realised by the Collector in exercise of the discretionary powers given to him under section 18 of Act XI of 1859, in cases in which the plea for exemption is based on grounds which ordinarily the Collector would not deem sufficient by themselves to justify exemption. Board's order of 1909 only gave a general idea as to how the Collector was to exercise his discretion.

(*b*) The Land Revenue Interest Act of 1935 was passed to validate interest on arrears of land revenue since the 19th January, 1933. It did not affect Board's order of 1909.

(*c*) Does not arise.

Raja BHUPENDRA NARAYAN SINHA Bahadur, of Nashipur: Is it not a fact that Sir B. L. Mitter, the then Member in charge of the Revenue Department, while introducing the Land Revenue Interest Act of 1935, said that to regularise the thing he had introduced the Act?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I am not sure. It may be so.

Mr. NUR AHMED: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is aware that there is any scheme for exemption of all estates from revenue sale in general and in Chittagong in particular? To the extent of 20 to 40 per cent.?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I am not aware of it.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Sir, we find that there are many questions pending regarding which answers are to be given up by the Nawab Bahadur of Dacca. But he is not coming and attending the Council at all. When are we to expect his answers to this question? If the Nawab Bahadur of Dacca does not come, then why some other Ministers should not be entrusted with the work?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I find the honourable member very pessimistic. The Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur will soon be attending. He is in excellent health and spirit and will be in a position to answer all supplementary questions.

Budget Discussions.

Dr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Now the general discussion of the budget will be resumed.

Khan Bahadur NAZIRUDDIN AHMAD: Mr. Deputy President, Sir, the present budget is admittedly a deficit budget. But the Government cannot help it, and in discussing the provision of the budget, we must be realistic in our approach. It is certainly deficient as to certain nation-building expenditures. But the Government have had to spend and have to spend huge sums of money on institutions in connection with the civil defence of the province. There is, first of all, the A.R.P. organisation. It means a lot of expenditure from the provincial funds. Then, again, there is the Civic Guard organisation which is a very serviceable institution and which has a good future. It also means much expenditure of money. There is again the infant institution of the Home Guards. This is also a useful feature of the civil defence organisation and it also means large expenditure of money.

Then, again, there are the abnormal circumstances—the excessive crimes against law and order, as a result of the serious unrest prevailing in the country, namely, the burning and destruction of post offices, courts, railways, police-stations and other institutions. That means a lot of expenditure under the head "Police". Fight against such crimes and similar offences calls for a considerable amount of expenditure of money on law charges. In these abnormal times it would be quite in order for the Government to frame a budget which would just enable it to carry on during these difficult times. It is quite natural on the part of the honourable membrs of the House to be concerned about the nation-building departments but it cannot and indeed it must not, be forgotten that the expansion of the nation-building departments and nation-building activities requires a considerable amount of money and such expenditure cannot on account of the deficit be met without the imposition of fresh taxes. I believe, that if the Government came forward with proposals for further taxation to cope with this abnormal situation, and provided for the expansion of the nation-building departments then they would have been criticised by every section of the House for imposing burdensome taxes upon a poor people at a wrong moment. Sir, it should be realised once and for all that, if we want to do good to the people, it cannot be done except by a willing submission of the people to taxation. In these circumstances, it seems to me that the present is an inopportune time to launch upon new taxation for nation-building purposes. The Nation-building Department must therefore wait, however, unacceptable and unpalatable the truth may appear to be. In the present circumstances, there are many difficulties which have resulted from the abnormal situation. The difficulty of the supply of food and other necessities of life has brought great hardship in the country. The conduct of the big middlemen and stockists of rice, *atta* and kerosene oil and other articles has also created considerable anxiety in the public mind. It is true that attempts were made to control the prices but I must say that the attempt has failed ignominously. In spite of the best efforts, this movement has hopelessly failed, and this failure is due largely to the difficulty of the problem itself. In fact there are strong invisible economic forces at work and the Government tried to control the prices in an artificial manner. It seems

to me that the attempt was a difficult and a hazardous one. Secondly, there is also the question of profiteering, the case of those businessmen, whom Mrs. D'Rozario rightly described as blood-suckers and so on, who are making the maximum of profit in the minimum of time. Government have not been able to stop this but are somehow or other managing things. Having regard to all this, this problem is beset with considerable difficulties. First of all, with regard to the rice situation——(Mr. NUR AHMED: Is the Government then helpless?) The Government is not quite helpless but they cannot control the actions of the Almighty, as I shall presently show. These profiteers are extremely clever people, indeed more clever than the Govrnment. With regard to rice, Sir, it was believed at one time that Bengal was self-sufficient, but that dream has been dispelled by the failure of supply of rice from Burma. It is now a publicly admitted and widely realised that importation of cheap rice from Burma produced a false impression that Bengal was self-sufficient in the matter of rice. But, as a result of the war, import of rice from Burma has entirely stopped and this has created a huge shortage in the supply of rice in Bengal. Now, Sir, as I was submitting, a little while ago, about the interposition of the Almighty——

In fact, there has been all-round failure of crops in Bengal. I believe no Government can control these unexpected events which are directed by a Superior Being. In these circumstances, the wholesale failure of crops and the stoppage of the importation of Burma rice are the two principal factors which must be taken into account. We may like it or not, there is a real shortage of supply and it is only the rich and the influential people who can hold large stocks. In the circumstances, there is some amount of gambling and speculation and, as a result there is some rise in the prices of these articles. With regard to the control of prices the Government officials, not being accustomed to the ways of these men, show some amount of inability to tackle with the problem created and there is also some amount of inefficiency in some cases. In many cases, we hear of some questionable means by which things are managed by the businessmen. Now, Sir, taking all these into account, it may be seen that the problem is an unprecedented one and, as a result, we have considerable difficulty created for the supply of foodstuff and other necessities of life. Take, for instance, kerosene oil. Kerosene oil used to come mainly from Burma and that has been stopped: that source having been stopped, we shall have to do with less kerosene. Then, Sir, there is competition for buying as much as possible; there is tendency for hoarding, and there is, also sale through secret agencies. All these should be taken into account. The difficulty created by the short supply of kerosene oil was attempted to be solved but that attempt has failed. It is not the Government alone that is responsible for this but economic causes have come into play and these economic causes are largely responsible for the situation. Of course the Government cannot be absolved from some responsibility in the matter. But the problem has got to be viewed from a wider outlook and from a larger point of view. It is known that, in India certain crops grown in plenty in certain provinces and there are provinces in which there is

deficit regarding certain crops. The Government of India have in consultation with the Provincial Governments. decided that there would be transfer of food crops from "surplus provinces" to "deficit provinces." That, I think, would mitigate to some extent, the food problem. We hear also that foreign food-grains are being imported to India. The situation is very grave and the problem is largely beyond control. But all we want is some amount of equitable distribution of the available foodstuff. Here again the people do not show that amount of public spirit and sacrifice which alone can go some way towards solving the difficulty. Richer people can somehow or other procure their needs leaving the poor in the background; and this difficulty cannot be solved by pious decision. The problem of framing a more satisfactory looking budget depends on money and on account of the abnormal expenses with which Government is faced today, it is very difficult for them to find sufficient money for it. Government must somehow tide over the difficulty. So I submit that the budget for the time being should be approached in a realistic spirit.

I consider, if I may say so without any disrespect, Mrs. D'Rozario's approach to the budget yesterday as most realistic. She admitted and realised that the difficult position was inherent in the nature of things themselves and said that things must be managed according to the circumstances. She was not full of admiration for the budget, but her criticisms were made from a realistic point of view, no doubt. The budget must be criticiised from that point of view. Criticisms from the Leader of the Opposition and from leaders of the Congress parties and other parties were highly fair but some allowance must be made for the difficulties due to the prevailing circumstances.

I have nothing further to add except to draw the attention of the Government to certain practical aspects of food-supply and other things connected with it. With regard to food-supply, greater vigilance should be exercised over the officials of the Government. They are not always up to the mark, not always above criticism and their actions are not always above suspicion. Certain things have come to my notice which require very full examination and thorough overhauling.

With regard to the Civic Guards, I wish to say one thing. The Civic Guards are supposed to get six annas per day for actual work done but there are enormous difficulties in their way. Lots of difficulties arose in the Civic Guard organization at Burdwan which resulted in the wholesale resignations of all men including officers. The news was not published in the newspapers for obvious practical reasons. This situation in Burdwan must be looked into. In fact, a large number of Civic Guard officers were summarily discharged which has created considerable dissatisfaction there. These people of the Civic Guard organization are expected to do very difficult work —they are to patrol the town from 12 at night to 2 in the morning in severe cold without any warm clothing. They have been supplied with uniforms which are meagre, they have to do their duties in the rains without rain-coats; they are thoroughly neglected in this respect when compared with the A.R.P. organisation. They are very badly treated in this respect

and this has caused wholesale dissatisfaction in the entire organization. I submit that Government should look into the matter and examine their grievances and try to improve the position. This question, I believe affects the whole province and Burdwan is only a symptom.

With these few words, I submit that the budget with all its defects and with all its difficulties, should be accepted.

Mr. J. B. ROSS: Mr. Deputy President, Sir, I have listened to many budget debates in this House and in another place over the last few years and I cannot think of any budget during that time which has evoked less interest than the one now before us. Presumably this is to a large extent due to the policy of the Government in keeping taxation proposals down to the absolute possible minimum and also to the realization of the fact that we are living in abnormal times and that abnormal financial tactics have to be adopted to fit the financial position of the province into those times.

Sir, the budget is a grim reflection of the difficult times we are living in, but I think I can truly say that it is an honest reflection. We even miss from the budget the usual minor political embellishments such as provision for communal harmony and the provision for Parliamentary Secretaries. The estimates of expenditure show on the one hand the rising tide of war expenditure and on the other the inevitable contractions in nation-building expenditure. We cannot unfortunately have it both ways and we have to accept the position that all our energies and our resources must be devoted to the prosecution of the war in which the future of this province and the future of India are vitally involved. The expansion of the nation-building departments is, however, only postponed and when victory is won, and I think we must all admit that a considerable progress has been made this year towards that end, we will be able to devote our resources and our energies to nation-building activities. It is inevitable that diverse criticisms as to the curtailment of expenditure on those activities should be heard. While we consider however that contraction of these activities is at present unavoidable and that they should be slowed down during the emergency period, there is at least one important exception. I refer to the Department of Agriculture which has for long been the Cinderella of Government departments and which unfortunately still—if we read the budget estimates correctly—remains the Cinderella although this department has assumed vital importance in the face of the food problem which confronts the province and India as a whole. During the current year Government spent over Rs. 18 lakhs on the "Grow More Food" campaign. What results were achieved by that campaign? Have Government got the staff and the machinery to make a success of any "Grow More Food" compaign? Are Government for example in a position to distribute improved paddy seeds on a wide enough scale and on terms within the means of the cultivator to make the "Grow More Food" scheme effective? Propaganda alone is of no value unless Government are in a position to do this. Have Government even made a survey of the cultivable lands on which an increased area of food-grains should be grown. The problem would not in our opinion be solved by reducing the jute acreage. The additional quantity of food crops which

could be sown would be unappreciable and is Government in any event in a position to ensure that the lands released would be sown with paddy? Moreover, to adopt this course would be to endanger what has been described as the life-blood of this province. Our criticism is that the budget estimates give no indication of that expansion of the Department of Agriculture which is absolutely essential if any "Grow More Food" campaign is to be effective. One primary essential in copying with the food problem is that we should have reliable crop statistics. It is well-known that the department's crops statistics are completely unreliable. This has been pointed out by the Royal Commission on Agriculture, by the Paddy Enquiry Committee and by the Land Revenue Commision. What steps are Government taking to remedy this? Is there any evidence that they are tackling the problem of agriculture with energy and determination? So much for the "Grow More Food" campaign.

A second department with regard to which we think the circumstances of war justify and even demand some expansion is the Industries Department, with particular reference to the assistance and encouragement to the small scale industries which produce articles required in connection with the war effort or in connection with the food problem. I think that we have the full support of my honourable friend the Leader of the Opposition in regard to this question. Here, again, we find little evidence that the Government are treating the problems of this department with energy and determination. I would instance the newly-created Fisheries Department. In the budget estimates of 1942-43 a sum of over Rs. 1 lakh was provided, but we find that only Rs. 34,000 of this sum has been spent. Government have secured an expert as Director of Fisheries but what is he to do with this paltry sum of Rs. 53,000 which is provided in the estimates of 1943-44? Is it not recognised that the proper development of fisheries is now of great importance in solving the food problem or at least in assisting the solution of the food problem, and is not the expansion of the department a primary consideration? This matter requires the immediate attention of Government, and I would ask the Finance Minister if he has any plans in regard to the same. The greater part of the war expenditure in 1942-43, namely, Rs. 1,29,00,000 has been devoted to the expenditure on the civil defence and we would like to pay our genuine tribute to the efficient A.R.P. services that have been built up in Calcutta. They came through their first baptism of air-raid with flying colours and the people of Calcutta can now feel confident that they have a fine body of men who will stand by them well in any ordeal which may yet be before them. This leads us to wonder as to what is going to happen to these men after the present emergency has passed. Government have in it the nucleus of a trained body of men and it would in our opinion be a great pity to see them thrown back on the unemployment market when the war is over. I suffer a suggestion to the Finance Minister that the department concerned might well consider now the retention of the services of those men in some shape or form when the war is over and plan a programme with that end in view as soon as possible. We have some criticisms with regard to the *bustee* area and the vital question

of maintaining the morale amongst these *bustee* people. But these will be voiced by my party when the appropriate demand for grant comes up in another place.

One other major item of war expenditure comes under the head "Dearness allowance". I would like to stress that the very considerable sum being spent under this heading is a measure of the dangerous inflation which is going on and of the Government's failure to control the prices of the necessaries of life. I have already expressed the dissatisfaction of my party with regard to the Government's handling of the food problem and I would only reiterate that we are particularly dissatisfied with regard to the failure of Government to deal with the black markets and speculators. On the revenue side the continuous rise in income-tax receipts and the rise in excise receipts, both owing to war reasons—are encouraging. We do not however consider the official explanation for the drop of Rs. 40 lakhs in the sales tax receipts as entirely adequate. During the last budget discussion this party expressed the view that the sales tax receipts had been overestimated but we did not dream that the receipts had been overestimated to the extent of Rs. 40 lakhs. The question we would therefore ask is—has there been any substantial evasion of the tax and is the Government's machinery for collection adequate? The decision that a small part of the budget deficit should be made up by additional taxation is one to which we cannot seriously object, nor can we seriously object in principle to the taxation proposals themselves.

With regard to electricity duty however we will have certain suggestions to put forward to Government when the Finance Bill comes before us for consideration.

One other matter to which I referred last year and I have done: that is in connection with agricultural loans. We note that some attempt has been made to show the position of loans to cultivators in the Red Book as a result of my party's representation during the last budget discussion. The figures given are—balance outstanding on 1st April, 1942—Rs. 1,26,09,000: advances during 1942-43—Rs. 1,13,46,000: repayments during 1942-43 revised estimates—Rs. 60,12,000: balance outstanding on 1st April, 1943—Rs. 1,79,43,000: that is an increase of Rs. 53 lakhs on the outstanding balance. We feel that in order to get a proper picture of the position it is necessary to see the repayments over a period of years. Cultivators have had in the past a notable good record for the repayment of loans but it is thought that there has recently been some deterioration and if Government find it necessary to go in for money-lending on this scale a careful check is essential. This scale of lending necessitates the submission to the Legislature of separate periodical accounts showing the actual progress of advances and repayments. We are constrained to ask what proportion of the revised estimates of repayments of Rs. 60 lakhs has actually been repaid during the current year, and we invite a statement in this connection from the Finance Minister.

Dr. RADHA KUMUD MOOKERJI: Sir, at the outset I wish to congratulate the Hon'ble Finance Minister on the very plain, simple and

unvarnished statement of facts and details with which he has presented this year's budget. Unfortunately the ardour and enthusiasm that I may feel in commenting on the budget are somewhat chilled by a consciousness of the constitutional disability under which this House is labouring, namely, that all our comments on the budget will be strictly of an advisory character and we have no power to influence the makers of the budget. But still within the limits one must do his duty and should do his best under the circumstances.

I wish to begin by putting some queries and questions on some items on which more light is required to be thrown. At page 2 of the Finance Minister's speech I find that there is reference to a substantial expenditure for the purpose of quelling disturbances and the rounding up of culprits in the district of Midnapore. Unfortunately, Midnapore looms large in the political life not merely of Bengal but of the whole of India: but from the same point of view I may say that it is a matter of some pride. What I mean to say is this that we have no idea of what kind of substantial extra expenditure was called for in the quelling of disturbances in that connection and I should like the Government to enlighten the House as to the amount of expenditure that is incurred on what may be called the excesses of the steps that have been taken in quelling the so-called disturbances. In another place a discussion was raised on this very question of the excesses of Government measures in quelling these disturbances but when substantial extra expenditure is incurred a popular House has a right to know how much extra expenditure was really incurred on account of the unjustifiable excesses which I understand will soon form the subject matter of investigation by a Judicial Tribunal. Now, if according to the findings of this Tribunal, some of the extra expenditure is unjustifiable and uncalled for, I should like to know who is going to pay for all this and who will be held liable for these excesses of expenditure incurred for the supposed excesses of Government measures in quelling these disturbances. My second point of query is this that the Government was responsible in underestimating the A.R.P. expenditure in the province with the result that they were able to get advantage from the Central of a contribution of nearly Rs. 44 lakhs against an assumption of Rs. 75 lakhs. I should like to know how these estimates are made and who is going to suffer for this hopelessly inaccurate estimate by which the province is to lose such a heavy amount of money.

The other point is that there is a frank confession on the part of the Finance Minister that there is an improvement of Rs. 47 lakhs in the provincial expenditure on the ground that there has been a slowing down of expenditure. I should say no Government can take credit for the fact that the expenditure has been slowing down. Now, it really means that the Government is apathetic to the expeditious execution of those objects for which the Legislature had sanctioned the budget. If the Government are unable to spend the moneys that are allotted within the year, the real point to be considered is that they must speed up the executive departments or the disbursing departments that are responsible for spending the moneys

granted. For, after all the moneys allotted must be spent for the promotion and well-being of the people and if the expenditure is slowed down it means there is a lamentable decline in the steps by which the nation-building departments are to be built up. Therefore the real reason for this improvement of Rs. 47 lakhs by the slowing down of the process of expenditure is really not a matter on which we can take credit or on which we can congratulate ourselves. In this connection, I would like to know whether this amount which has not been spent will revert to the department for which it was earmarked or whether this amount will lapse. For in that case there will be a serious loss to the nation-building departments for not being able to spend the budgetted amount for the amelioration of the condition of the people.

My next point is that some amount of comfort has been sought in the fact that excise receipts have gone up by Rs. 48 lakhs. Against this picture we have to consider the picture that was held up before the country by Congress Governments of so many provinces, namely, that they began by abolishing excise as a source of revenue by their schemes of prohibition. Here, so far as Bengal was concerned we always took pride in the fact that it was to the credit of the province of Bengal that its excise revenue was the lowest among all the provinces of India. I hope Bengal will still be able to retain that reputation. The improvement in excise revenue—this blame is fastened upon the outsiders and that is an unkind cut. I do not think there is any distinction between the people of Bengal and the people of other provinces in such matters. Therefore, this matter is to be investigated properly. The explanation that is put forward by the Government is that the improvement of excise revenue is due to the influx into this province of large numbers of non-Bengali labourers and others. Now, this is a serious indictment to make against the nationals of other province and I think that we should not without proper consideration indulge in remarks embodied in the Government documents for which proper enquiry or investigation has not been made. I say this in the interest of inter-provincial amity.

Next, there is a decline under revenue from stamps to the extent of Rs. 25 lakhs. Now, this has a very great bearing upon the problems of revenue for the future. If it really means that there is less of business in the country, I do not know what remedies can be applied from now so that the revenue from stamps and from the connected business may have a tendency towards growing rather than declining. Then there is a drop of Rs. 40 lakhs under sales tax. The preceding speaker Mr. Ross has already commented upon this item on the lines on which I wanted to make my comments. So there is no necessity for me to say anything but this that at the time when the unpopular sales tax was introduced many members of the House felt that it was unnecessary and uncalled for and that they expected that the gain that would result from this tax would be very controversial and doubtful. Now perhaps the opinion of those doubting members is proving to be true and therefore the Government should reconsider the position with reference to the sales tax which falls

very heavily upon the pockets of the poor. There is a case for a complete investigation of this whole question of sales tax. Now one reason given for it is that the reduction in the revenue from sales tax is due to the reduction of private sales of building materials and imported goods. Now this unfortunate decline of the private business which feeds hundreds of people in the province who are faced by starvation on account of curtailment of their means of livelihood,—this question is connected with the action of the Central Government and their autocratic control over the business which means to the poor so much, Government has controlled the trade in certain articles on the ground of military considerations. They should have given scope to private trade for selling defined quantities or percentage, of the goods under control. It would not be for the Central Government to say that they should have a control upon 95 per cent. of classes of goods which to their knowing are required as necessaries for the poor. Well I do not like to say anything with reference to a commodity like paper, for after all paper might have been more required by the cultured sections who form the minority. So far as building trade or trade of transport is concerned or trade in lower grades of steel or corrugated iron sheets, all these articles form the subject matter of enormous private business all over the province—a business that feeds millions of our masses, and therefore the Central Government should think deeply before encroaching upon this sphere of private trade and business by controlling and curtailing which a general starvation on a mass scale is threatened. I therefore wish that Government should go into the roots of this matter instead of comforting themselves with the cheap assumption that there has been a reduction in the private sales of building materials and imported goods. They should have consulted the Central Government, they should have debated the matter with the Central Government in order to see how much private trade should still go on unhampered by the control of the Central Government on the ground of purely military requirements. For, after all the necessities of the civil population also have an indirect but not a less important bearing upon war economy. There should not be created a mass discontent on account of the shortage of and curtailment of the very means of livelihood. Popular discontent should be always seriously considered in order that it may not affect the war effort; so even military considerations must have to reckon with serious considerations affecting the civil population of the country and their welfare and their contentment has a bearing on the war effort.

Now I come to other points in the budget, namely, the Police budget, the Civil Works budget and the Education budget. Sir, it has been stated that while all the nation-building departments have undergone retrenchments as regards their expenses it was left to the Department of Police to fight for an addition of Rs. 12 lakhs to its budget. Sir, I have been considering the growth of the Police budget all these years and I find that there are very few countries in the world which can compare with our Provincial Government in regard to the percentage of revenue which the provision for law and order bears to the total revenue of the province.

Now, Sir, whereas the Police budget is about Rs. 3 crores, the Education budget only barely exceeds one and a half crores and this one and a half crores must be considered along with the fact that the public themselves are paying materially and substantially for their own education in the shape of fees. The Education budget has a right to be considered as of equal value with the budget framed for the Police Department and that in a province where there is illiteracy on a mass scale. Sir, there is no future for any country in the world on the basis of a mere 5 per cent. literacy and if literacy in English is considered, then it will perhaps be less than 5 per cent. What future can there be, Sir, for a province under these conditions of dense ignorance of the masses? Now, Sir, particularly this year the reduction of Rs. 10 lakhs from the Education budget will react with disastrous consequences on the whole classes of the men who are employed in the sacred task of educating the people. As has been already stated by several speakers, schools and colleges, especially private schools and colleges are carried on under the most difficult and unforeseen circumstances and Government should have come to their rescue of those poor teachers who are unable to carry on their income having been substantially reduced by the closure of schools and colleges. There is a good deal of allowance made for what is called the dearness allowance but here an unemployment allowance is called for and that among a people who are used to suffering all the privations of life without protest, silently, because they think that suffering is the badge of their tribe. I think therefore that this enlightened Government should be the foremost in applying relief where it is most urgently due without reference to the strength of the agitation that generally backs up these demands. I therefore strongly plead that Government should be more generous in spite of the fact that there has been a reduction of Rs. 10 lakhs in the Education budget, and that instead of this dearness allowance Government should consider to what extent they can meet the difficulty through which the teachers of schools and colleges are passing.

In that connection I cannot help remarking that not merely is there an inroad upon the Education budget but that there has been an inroad of the military on education in the shape of the military and A.R.P. disloding and occupying the school and college buildings in different localities thereby preventing these schools and colleges from functioning as usual. The question of accommodation is a very difficult question because an ordinary house cannot be engaged for the purposes of a well-equipped school. Accommodation for a school is highly specialised in many particulars and such specialised accommodation cannot be made available at a moment's notice. But unfortunately quite at a moment's notice the military annexes the buildings where schools are located. Sir, I can go on complaining on many items but as the time at my disposal is short I shall close by making one general remark and that is that the Bengal Government forgets that it is catering for a population of 55 millions (Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR: It is 60 millions). Well, according to the latest census it is 60 millions—Bengal Government is catering for an expanding population of 60 millions with a revenue of Rs. 16 crores out of which

Rs. 6 crores have been recently raised by some kind of taxation some of which again is unjustifiable. What justification has the Bengal Government to submit to this inevitable initial handicap when we find that the presidency of Bombay with a population of only 16 millions has the same provincial revenues of Rs. 16 crores—how on earth the Bengal Government can undertake to make both ends meet in such circumstances. How could the Provincial Government agree to the iniquitous settlement which the Government of India made: that is a position which Bengal must fight against with the Centre—Bengal must tight against the initial financial handicap, the financial handicap which is crippling and throttling the economic life of the whole province—that handicap must be fought tooth and nail by proper method and procedure. The Government of Bengal must take up the matter very earnestly and show to the world that whereas Bombay with a population of 16 millions are getting Rs. 16 crores of revenue receipts, Bengal with a population of 60 millions is getting the same amount for the purpose of a population three times as large so that there is not enough money to go round. You say that on account of war we are faced with a huge deficit. But I say that you are suffering from a chronic deficit which is ruinous for the province because the province has been rendered unbearably poor on account of the initial iniquity in the distribution of revenues between the province and the Centre, the distribution is iniquitous because intrinsically Bengal has the largest amount of revenue amounting to about Rs. 40 crores gross total out of which the Centre deducts about Rs. 30 crores whereas Bombay gets off very cheaply perhaps because Bombay Government and the commercial magnates of the province are better able to fight their case with the Centre than Bengal. Anyhow, Bengal has lost its influence with the Central Government with the result that we are today driven down to the verge of starvation and our nation-building departments cannot possibly work on account of that initial handicap.

Once more, Sir, I wish to congratulate the Finance Minister on the unvarnished tale of woes that he has given without seeking to gloss over it. He has given very useful facts and figures in the course of his statement.

Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR: Mr. Deputy President, Sir, I also should like to begin by congratulating the Hon'ble the Finance Minister for the lucid statement which he has placed before this House. As has been stated by the speaker who spoke just before me, he has sought to conceal nothing in his budget statement and has taken into confidence the members of the House with regard to the disastrous situation which faces the province today. It is regrettable that the Hon'ble the Finance Minister should in his first budget be confronted with a situation over which he had no control. We wish he could have presented a happier statement to the province and to the Legislature, but we are at least grateful that he has not sought to hide in high words our poor position or to make us forget the grim reality which faces this province. As has been stated by more speaker than one in this House, it is not our privilege to discuss each item of the budget or

to influence the action of the Government as to how money should be spent. We are merely an advisory body. I therefore propose to confine my remarks only to certain suggestions which I hope the Ministry will keep in mind in incurring the expenditure so far as they remain under control for the current year and in framing proposals for the future years.

I shall start with the question of civil defence. I would ask this Ministry to realise and to put it very strongly before the Central Government that civil defence, if analysed properly, is indispensably linked with the military defence, and that the burden of civil defence has been unjustly imposed upon the provincial revenues. This is a most unsatisfactory state of affairs. This question of civil defence should be taken up by the Central Exchequer. I think that this House as well as the other House will give every support to the Ministry in every endeavour they make in getting, if possible the entire amount, and if that is not possible at any rate a major portion of the amount incurred in civil defence expenditure in the province from the Central revenues I would strongly urge upon the Government to keep this point in mind. A very large proportion of our total provincial income is spent on civil defence, but if the Central revenues pay this cost, this money may be released for more immediate purposes, for the needs and demands of the province which are also imperative. In this connection, I would also like to place before the consideration of the House that civil defence is something which cannot be separated from the morale, from the general and temper of the people. A weak and hungry people is a source of danger to civil as well as military defence. Any money which is diverted from any of the nation-building departments and spent in connection which are specifically and primarily civil defence therefore weakens civil defence itself. Therefore from that point of view also, the Government should put every possible pressure to obtain the entire expenditure of civil defence from the Central revenues.

Then, Sir, with regard to particular items in the Education budget, I wish to make certain comments which I hope Government will take due notice of. The first item is the Jadavpur College of Technology. Here we have a fine institution whose value is recognised not only in this province but outside. Awards for scholarships have been made by other provinces. For instance, the Bihar Government maintains 10 Muslim students in the Jadavpur College at their cost but unfortunately it is otherwise in Bengal. Not only do the Bengal Government not give any scholarship or stipends tenable at the Jadavpur College but on the contrary there is a standing order of the Director of Public Instruction that if any scholarship-holder comes to Jadavpur College, his scholarship is immediately cancelled. This is, I think, a most regrettable state of affairs. When other provinces recognise the value of this College of Technology, which has trained so many efficient electrical and mechaical engineers, not only for this province but for other provinces, it is essential and imperative that the Government of Bengal should overcome its past prejudice and old conservatism which viewed the Jadavpur College of Technology with suspicion and come to the help of the institution.

Sir, in this connection I would also draw the attention of Government to the opportunity which has been offered by this present war towards the development of education in certain directions in this province. I know that Hon'ble Ministers might say that war is a time of economy but equally, Sir, it is true that war is a time when new ventures are made in the line of educational expenditure. The present situation has given an opportunity of developing certain lines of engineering in the country which were not there before. Calcutta has certain advantage which no other place possesses. I think, Sir, that it is time when the Government of Bengal should start a course of naval engineering and also ask for the help of the Government of India in opening a branch of naval engineering in the Sibpur College of Engineering. This can be done with a certain initial outlay by the Bengal Government. There is no doubt whatsoever that if the Bengal Government is willing to take the initiative, the advanced sections of the country will come to its help. In this connection I will draw the attention of the Government and Hon'ble Ministers to what actually happened in the case of the Institute of Chemical Research. The Tatas have placed funds at the disposal of the Government of India, I believe the sum is about Rs. 2 lakhs or it may be Rs. 5 lakhs. I am not sure but in any case it is not more than Rs. 5 lakhs. But they made a condition that the institute should be set up in Poona. This has been done and since then the Government of India have spent many times five lakhs in developing and running the Institute. Sir, today in Bengal there is opportunity of developing naval engineering and there is also opportunity for developing a Glass Institute which I understand is in the contemplation of the Government of India.

I will now refer specifically to the Faridpur District School Board. This has been very hard hit by the sudden decision to cut down the Government grant from one lakh fifty-five thousand to only six thousand rupees. This not only threatens the financial stability of the Board, but also endangers the economic condition of thousands of poor primary school teachers. As regards the condition of the teachers of primary schools in our district and elsewhere in the province, I may say that they are very hard hit at the present time. Hopes were given out that more money should be granted to poor school teachers many of whom have been deprived of the possibilities of their livelihood as a result of the present rise in prices. Besides the budget of the Board was framed on the assumption of grant of one lakh and fifty-five thousand, and that budget has since been approved by the Government. Government have therefore a moral obligation in paying that amount to the School Board, and the sudden reduction to the ridiculous figure of six thousand only is absolutely unjustified. Nor is it necessary, for we find that almost twelve lakhs of rupees are being surrendered as unspent balance. I would strongly impress upon the Government that in view of such large unspent balances, the reduction cannot be defended on any ground whatever. In this connection I would also draw attention of the Hon'ble Minister to the case of one particular school which was not given the grants given to other institutions. As a result of the crisis in education since the advent of Japan into the war, private institutions have been hard hit, and Government have rightly decided to help

schools and colleges with funds. I wish these grants are still larger, but in any case, this help should be given to all institutions. I fail to understand why Laik Jubilee School was refused this aid. I understand that this school was refused the grant on a technical ground. It did not satisfy certain conditions which were imposed. but this is not sufficient reason for refusing help. I would request the Hon'ble Minister to keep in mind the plight of the Laik Jubilee Institution.

Then, Sir, references have been made to the question of the food grown in this province. Here I find myself very largely in agreement with what has been said by my friend on my right, namely the Leader of the European Party. I agree with him also that today this is perhaps the most outstanding problem in the province. And if this problem cannot be adequately solved, then Government and in fact the whole life of the province will be threatened in a way the consequences of which we cannot fully realise at this stage. We are glad to find that some attempts are being made with regard to tackling this question. The same thing holds of clothing. At the present stage, it is impossible to expect that, suddenly, all on a sudden, we can develop, on a very large scale, all the industries or all the industrial concerns which will fully meet the demands of clothing in this province. It is all to the good that the question of the spinning wheel has also been raised and taken up. It is all to the good that the Hon'ble Agriculture Minister and the Hon'ble Minister of Communications and Works have taken up this question and are trying to popularise the cult of *charka* in the province. This, Sir, as I have said, is all to the good. We want equal or even more energetic steps regarding the growth of food crops. I agree with the Leader of the European Party that Government must take adequate steps to provide proper seeds. They must also provide agricultural improvements and implements for the cultivators. I would in this connection like to know from the Hon'ble Minister concerned what steps have been taken or are being taken in this direction. Sir, there is one point on which I regret to differ from my friend the Leader of the European Party and that is the policy followed by the Government at the present moment in regard to jute. It is to my mind an extremely regrettable step that the Government have taken in deciding to change their original decision in regard to the jute acreage. At first it was declared that Government had come to the decision that one-third of the acreage of 1942 would be released for jute cultivation this year. But I do not see what are the reasons that influenced the Government later on to change their decision and accepting the suggestion for 50 per cent. of the recorded acreage of 1940. In think this is a very detrimental step and I am afraid I cannot agree with the arguments advanced by my honourable friend on my right, namely, the Leader of the European Group, that this release of more land for jute will not in any way affect the jute situation. I do not think, Sir, he has any large experience of the conditions in the villages of Bengal and he does not perhaps know that the land utilised for jute is also land that can be utilised for paddy. If a large proportion of this land is actually taken from paddy and is allowed to be used for growing jute this will certainly affect the food position. If that is allowed to be done, it will affect the stability and

tranquillity of the province; therefore I think that Government even now when it has the time should reconsider its decision and not allow more than one-third of the acreage. We have seen a press notice issued by the Government that propaganda will be carried on for the cultivation of more and more food, but to my mind there is something contradictory in the attitude which says on the one hand "grow more food" in lands fit for the cultivation of paddy and at the same time also says that more land should be released for jute. Ordinary people will think that after all if Government recommend their decision and release more land for jute, they have done so with the knowledge that a fair price should be ensured to the growers, but, Sir, I do not know if that would be the actual position. In that view of the case, I would very strongly urge upon the Government to see to it that proper steps be taken not to give effect to the new decision and that not more than one-third of the recorded land be brought under cultivation of jute under any circumstances.

Sir, all these questions, the question of more food for the province, better clothing facilities for the province, all these questions are connected with two other problems on which also I should like to touch for a brief moment. Without education we cannot persuade the cultivators to take up better methods of cultivation and in fact even when they realise the need,——

(At this stage the honourable member reached the time-limit but was allowed to finish in two minutes.)

They have not the scientific equipment, they have not got the necessary knowledge to adopt the new methods and principles of cultivation. Therefore education must advance among them on a larger scale than it has done in the past, and for that purpose more and more money is necessary.

Here, Sir, I would conclude with another appeal to the Hon'ble the Finance Minister who is also the Chief Minister of this province that he has at his command resources which still remain untapped. Six years ago, he gave a glorious lead to the province. I think it will not be an exaggeration to say that today he occupies his present position on the strength of the call which he gave to the people of this province. If the Permanent Settlement were abolished, it would solve most of our difficulties and lead to the economic regeneration of this province. Besides putting the Government in possession of vaster resources, it would also change the character of the people, bring back initiative into their life, and change their outlook from one of dependence on returns from land and vested interests and create a spirit of enterprise and adventure. That was the call which brought him to the leadership of Bengal, and recently we find that he has again remembered that old pledge. We are very glad to find that he has issued suggestions that this question will be taken up immediately We urge that in spite of the difficulties which may be presented, in spite of the international complications of today and in spite of the very great limitations on the power of the Provincial Government, the present position of the land tenure of the province must be changed. With the abolition of the Permanent Settlement, more money will be released for the purpose of nation-building

activities in this province. If the Chief Minister does so, and I have no doubt that he will do so, then and then alone can be present a balanced budget—a budget which will reflect the aspiration and hopes of this province and its people.

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: Mr. Deputy President, Sir, it is an undoubted fact that we have before us a gloomy budget due to events over which we had no control. The Hon'ble the Finance Minister has our full sympathy. In fact we can congratulate him for the clear and business-like way in which he has presented it.

Sir, since 1941 we are having a succession of bad revenue receipts. In 1941-42 the deficit on revenue account was Rs. 56,10,000. It would be Rs. 1,54,08,000 in the current year, and it is anticipated that the deficit under this head alone would be almost equally bad, would be Rs. 1,52,98,000 next year. Of course the outside revenue account receipts help to tone down the deficits on revenue accounts; but those receipts are more or less illusory in the sense that they are derived mostly from loans taken from the Government of India. First we were hard hit by the Meston Award: secondly, the Otto Niemeyer Settlement was not quite satisfactory. We think we are entitled to the whole of the jute export duty and the whole of the income-tax derived from Bengal. Receipts from these two heads can help Bengal a great way in putting her finances to some order commensurate with her needs.

Look, Sir, how hard hit we are. We would be owing the Government of India a sum of about Rs. 4 crores in the current year and in the next our indebtedness to the Centre would be increased to Rs. 4 crores 75 lakhs. As against this just consider that expenditure budgeted for 1943-44 on A.R.P. and civil defence measures amount to Rs. 3,75,17,000. The total budgetary expenditure from 1940 on these heads alone is about Rs. 9½ crores of which a liability of about Rs. 3¼ crores has fallen on this province. Now, Sir, Bengal is practically in the war zone and is defending India against Japanese aggression. Defence is a Central subject. All expenditure on all defence measures including those of the A R. P. and the civil defence should be borne by the Government of India abrogating all previous arrangements with the province. I will go a step further and urge that these debts should be wiped off by the Government of India in the same way as it did wipe off Bengal's debt of Rs. 8 crores at the start of the New Constitution.

If the Government of India would want to know what the Government of Bengal had done to get more revenue, before the debts are cancelled, the Hon'ble the Finance Minister's proposals for further taxation expected to bring in an addition of Rs. 33 lakhs is the answer, though in my view regard being had to the extraordinary situation we are passing through with the general public hard-hit by the phenomenal increase in the cost of living, with usual trade channels dislocated and with the general poverty of the mass particularly the middle-class *bhadralog* community, fresh taxation this year should have been avoided.

This leads me, Sir, to a consideration of the proposed taxes. To my mind taxes on betting and amusements have been well-directed. But I am afraid I cannot say this of electricity, for further taxation on electricity is a raid on a basic need and this should have been avoided. Excise shows improved revenues which means a lowering of the standard of morality among the general run of the people. Instead of on electricity, Government should have imposed enhanced and prohibitive duties on the consumption of *ganja*, wine and other commodities of excise. However, the Hon'ble the Finance Minister should be congratulated that he refused to subject Bengal to heavy taxation at a time when people can hardly make two ends meet.

There is undoubtedly no discernible policy behind the budget except an attempt to anyhow get on. This, however, should occasion no surprise. Those who are hard on this point forget for the moment that a great war is on, which in its devastating carnage is consuming a large slice of our revenues. At the same time, I must say that the Education Department and the University should not have yielded to panic in December, 1941, when the Japanese made onslaught on Burma and overran it. That has helped to disintegrate education. I find no justification whatsoever why there should have been decrease of expenditure in Education, Public Health and Civil Works. It is regrettable that several teachers lost their jobs and many had to live on low subsidy, that the malarial stricken people should be complaining of want of quinine, that people should be complaining that there was not sufficient and good number of tubewells and that pipes should not be available for the purpose of sinking tubewells. Now, Sir, the poverty of the people is so appalling that the resisting power of the people has considerably decreased. The only way to increase the power to resist diseases would be to better the economic condition of the people. Yet, I am sorry to observe the economic warfare we are in and which is bound to intensify with the cessation of war, there is hardly any preparation to meet it. Advantage should be taken in full for furtherance of industrial enterprices, both small and big. Even in the midst of war, the warring nations have put themselves to high competitive excellence and unless from now on we begin to translate into action what we say and what we draw up in paper we will be swept away in the fight for existence and will be thrown to such economic subservience that our political salvation will be a myth. Sir, we are face to face with starvation. The first duty of the Government is to save life and property. That duty must be discharged quickly and fully. To an interpellation by my friend Mr. B K. Roy Chowdhury, the Government gave the answer that during 1942-43, we would require 9,266,800 tons of rice while Bengal is expected to yield only 6,938,800 tons —thus leaving a deficit of 2,328,000 tons of rice. True, we have a Directorate of Civil Supplies started some months ago with an initial expenditure of Rs. 4½ lakhs and given Rs. 50 lakhs more for purchase of supplies. An expert who is of the people who would feel with the people, sympathise with the people in their distress should have been at the helm of it. But is it pertinent to enquire what the department has so far done? A debate on food ensued in September last in this Council. The price of rice then

was ranging between Rs. 8 to Rs. 10 per maund. Now it is Rs. 17. All other questions must be relegated to the background. This question must be solved without delay. As a separate day will be given for discussion of this all important question, I will reserve my comments for that day and will content myself by simply observing this much today that export must cease, the Government should purchase outside the province rice as well as wheat and take measures against hoarding and give licences with strict conditions to persons whom they can trust to purchase within the districts and arrange for speedy distribution to the deficit areas at controlled prices. I am not surprised at the news of hunger marchers and the extensive paddy looting throughout the province. The best way to maintain law and order would be the mode of quickest supply of the necessaries of life including cloth at moderate prices and not by shooting or *lathi* charges.

Sir, I was amazed at the figures given by the Home Minister of persons detained under the Defence of India Act. They number several thousands, many of whom are the pick of men in the society. That itself is evidence of distruct of the people and a condemnation of the conditions we live in. This proves that Government is not broad based so much on the good-will of the people as on the bayonet. You are waging a people's war. Why don't you allow the leaders of the people to come out and take their proper place and proper share in the defence of the country? Many a home has been made helpless with no proper maintenance allowed to the dependents of the family. I plead for trust begets trust. I plead for their release. I plead no time should be lost at least to give effect to the recommendations of the Special Tribunal which was set up to go through their cases. Excuse for staying hands is hardly just. Government in starting the Tribunal knew, it was started in war time and anticipated that its recommendations also would be made during the war time. That war must not be trotted out as an excuse for delaying action on the report. A word about the new order. My friend Mr. Kamini Kumar Dutta referred to it. I was not struck so much by his furious attack of the Ministry for not having prepared the country for receiving it as by his bold optimism. But when I see with what ruthlessness Governments both here and in Great Britain are opposing the release of Mahatma Gandhi who is on the verge of death, and who represents the cause of India's Emancipation in spite of the representation of many millions of people not merely of India but of the whole world, I may be pardoned if I say that my vision of a new order in India is somewhat blurred. I remember, Mr. Winston Churchill saying that he was not made the first Minister of the King to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire. Such a man's attitude will be one of the dominating factor in the shaping of the things to come. At the same time I say I do not despair for man proposes, God disposes.

A pertinent question arises in this connection. We hear an all-round talk of formation of National Government. We want genuine thing. But would it be a National Government if a Cabinet is formed with the representatives of the different parties of the Legislature? My answer is an emphatic "No", so long as the Governor does not establish

a convention for not exercising his special individual and discretionary powers. That is the crux of the whole situation. Suppose it were Ministers of all parties which agreed to set up the Dacca Central Jail Shooting Committee. How the matter would improve if the highest would set his foot on it. The Home Minister the other day promised you an important enquiry into the Midnapore happenings and we were all happy. But how matters would turn out whether such a Committee will at all sit in the near future alone can say but if past be a guide, the British Group in the Legislature who always is an upholder of iron rule everywhere except in their homelands need feel no perturbation over it Yet I think true facts should come out and false propaganda must cease. The world must know that what we have got at present is but a mockery of self-government and world opinion is a factor which a defenceless country like ours can ill-afford to lose. I am therefore of opinion that in due discharge of their responsibilities to the Legislature the Hon'ble Ministers should state frankly and fully wherein they failed and how far and why they failed and in proportion they say so, they help in the evolving of the Order to come, in which every one will, let us hope walk with heads erect, and look with full eyes and no fear and live with full bellies and no care.

Mr. LATAFAT HOSSAIN: Sir, I rise to criticise the policy of the Government regarding the supply of foodstuffs to jute mill hands and factory workers. The employers are very anxious to see that their workers get sufficient quota of rice, *dal*, *atta*, mustard oil and kerosene oil, sugar, salt, etc., but they are unable to purchase them in quantities without the help of Government. And in consequence of it there is a widespread harassment among the working class people of the industrial areas. If the Government failed to take prompt and immediate steps to supply a fair and sufficient quantity of foodstuffs in the mill area either through the management or through their own co-operative stores to meet the necessities of the workers, there is every apprehension of a great disturbance in the industrial area which may result, in a complete deadlock in the working of mills and factories. I being associated with the working class people day in and day out can judge and experience their difficulties and inconvenience and the subsequent situation that would arise out of it better than anybody else who lives far from these poor folk. At a meeting of the Advisory Committee called by the Labour Commissioner at Writers' Buildings under the Presidentship of Mr. L. G. Pinnell, to think and devise means of supply of foodstuff among the labourers, certain suggestions were placed before the said meeting by the Trade Union Leaders to solve the problem, but no action has been taken as yet by the Government according to that suggestion. *Atta* which is the main food of the up-country workers is not available, although Government is giving this *atta* to other class of Bengali people whose chief food is rice not *atta*. More serious is the problem of kerosene oil which is sold by the Government licensed agents, but these agents are supplying the consumers and the consumers are selling the kerosene oil with very good profits to hawkers who are charging as much as nine annas per bottle against the controlled rate. The result is that the majority of the workers are going without light.

Regarding sugar our Bhatpara Municipality received its quota of sugar of 200 maunds, but this is supplied through shops in the so-called *bhadralog* localities not in places convenient to the workers. Recently 200 maunds of sugar were supplied to an agent of ward No. 2, the centre of working class people. This agent supplied to sub-agents in *bhadralog* localities by the order of the Subdivisional Officer of Barrackpore and 15 maunds only were supplied out of 200 maunds to the workers whose population is 85,000 against a total population of 120,000 within the Bhatpara municipal area. The result is that the workers have to pay double the rates to procure sugar, rice, *dal* and other foodstuff. I suggest that Government should consult the Trade Union leaders for the proper distribution of foodstuff. Representatives of millhands should be given special power to check profiteering by market shopkeepers and on their reports shops should be taken over by Government against profiteering shopkeeper after proper enquiry.

In any case representatives of working class must be consulted for proper and fair distribution of foodstuff, kerosene oil and fuel, etc.

Dr. KUMUD SANKAR RAY: Sir, I confess that I had not very much time to go into the detailed examination of the budget because unfortunately I had received copies of the budget only this morning. Therefore I do not think I am competent to criticise the budget properly; but from what I have heard, from the various observations that have been made by the honourable members in this House regarding the various problems which are facing the country, I have noticed that there is a general desire that it is not much use criticising the budget because of the special circumstance which is now existing owing to the present war and that there is a feeling amongst many that all our energies must be diverted and must be directed towards war efforts and all other claims must be subjugated accordingly.

There is one thing however that appeals to me and that is this: if it is desired that the war should be prosecuted in a proper manner, and in view of the fact that this war is a different war from other wars—it is a total war—not only the army is fighting for the war but as every civilian has to do his bit in some way or other towards helping the war efforts: the cultivators are growing food not only for the civilian population but for the army: factory workers—who are working day and night—working overtime—to prepare machinery parts which will be required for war purposes. Similarly various kinds of activities have to be continued primarily for the purpose of war and if all these people who have got to continue to work efficiently for increasing the war efforts it is necessary that we should not neglect their health. You cannot expect an unhealthy nation to give maximum results, particularly in time of emergency created by the war. Therefore if I make any observation I shall limit myself particularly with regard to the budget of the Public Health Department. With regard to other departments, *e.g.*, Education, there are many more competent speakers who dwelt on the subject. Looking very cursorily over the budget of the Public Health Department I find—and I must say that this cannot be attributed to the war—that in the Public Health Department the amount budgeted for has not been spent in full: and this has been a chronic affair

with this department. Not only this year, but I have been noticing this state of affairs from 5 to 6 years. It has been our unfortunate experience that even the little that could be provided for the public health of the province, the department could not spend in full and all along there was a saving. I do not understand, and I am not in the know, what is the reason for it. Everybody knows what havoc is caused owing to the incidence of malaria and other diseases: so there is no reason why the money allotted to the Public Health Department could not be spent for their prevention. If you look at pages 289, 296 and 300 you will find that the items which were provided last year have been further reduced. I submit that even in the interest of the war it is necessary that we should continue our public health activities in proper manner. And therefore it is rather regrettable that not only that department could not spend the amount which was provided for in the last year's budget but this year also there has been a further reduction probably because the amount allotted in the previous budget could not be spent. Reforms should be introduced to see that the working of the Public Health Department is better organized. So, I would earnestly request the Government to look to this aspect of the question and not to reduce the grant of the Public Health Department this year.

Previous speakers have raised the point that the Government has rightly given assistance to the school teachers of non-medical institutions but the claims of the non-official medical schools, who have also been hard-hit due to the abnormal rise in prices of foodstuffs and other materials have been lost sight of. Nothing has been done towards these non-official medical institutions and non-official hospitals which are doing a large part of the public health work in this province and I would urge upon the attention of the Hon'ble Minister of the Public Health Department towards this question.

The other item that I would like to mention in this House is the question of quinine. Previous speakers have dwelt on the dearth of quinine and I need not deal with that matter any further excepting this that though there was an increased amount of Rs. 11 lakhs more in last year's budget, it could not be spent. This was really an increase of Rs. 3 lakhs over the year previous to that. But this amount could not be spent in spite of the knowledge that the problem of quinine would be very serious particularly due to the fall of Java wherefrom we used to get our supplies. In this year a sum has been provided in the budget for the working of a scheme for the increased supply of quinine, I do not know what is this scheme but I hope that the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the department will look into the matter. I would request him also to see why the total amount of money which was provided for the increased plantation of cinchona could not be spent.

There is one more question that I should like to deal with and that is the dental education. The Government has rightly introduced the Dentists Registration Act and saw the need of properly qualified dentists for the province. The only institution of this kind in this province, which had been training students in dentistry, has been recently very hard-hit. They

have provided nearly 70 per cent. of the dentists which have been recruited for the army. As a matter of fact there is only one other institution in the whole of India which is in Lahore. And this institution of which I am speaking has been very hard-hit due to the loss of students who used to come here from outside the province of Bengal and who are not coming now due to the danger of air raid. I would therefore earnestly submit to the consideration of the Government that some kind of relief for this institution, which is doing very good to the province, may be granted. I am afraid, there is not much time left for our sitting and the Hon'ble Minister for Finance would reply to the points touched by us. So, with these few words, I would like to take my seat but before I sit I would be failing in my duty if I did not refer to the question of tuberculosis. The question of a climatic sanatorium for this province has been hanging fire for a long time and it has almost become a scandal now. We thought that some solution would be made this year and that the existing sanatorium at Kurseong would be utilised and expanded to provide for the much needed climatic sanatorium for Bengal, but for certain reasons which I do not like to go into in this House, a deadlock has again been created and I hope that the previous offer and assistance in this matter given by the Government would be pursued for the development and expansion of the Kurseong Sanatorium so that Bengal may be provided with at least one climatic sanatorium.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, I must at the outset offer my apologies to you and through you to the members of this House for my inability to have been present during the debates for the last two days. Sir, I have however, the advantage of notes taken by my honourable colleague, and I wish to say a few words on some points which I consider called for by way of a short reply.

I am very thankful to my friend Khan Bahadur Saiyed Muazzamuddin Hosain for his support and proposals. My frined knows very well that our field of taxation is very limited and we have got to make a very careful choice. As regards the suggestions of taxation on luxuries and agricultural income, I can tell the House that taxing luxuries has been under the consideration of Government for some time past and we are still considering the subject. As regards taxation on agricultural income, a Bill would have been introduced but had been held up for circumstances over which we had no control, but we have not lost sight of these two possible sources of revenue. Sir, I can inform my friend that he is under a misapprehension in assuming that no part of the money sanctioned for communal harmony has been spent. This has been due to the fact that we have not been able to prepare and formulate a detailed scheme but a very terse scheme has been prepared and we hope we will be able to take up this work and make some beginning before the close of the present financial year. As regards the suggestion made by my honourable friend with regard to the staff for jute restriction and his advice to follow the procedure in the Settlement Department, I can only say that it is a useful suggestion but to adopt it would be throwing out of employment a number of low paid officers for

certain months of the year. A belated proposal has been made in certain quarters that these officers might be employed with regard to propaganda work for "Grow More Food" campaign, agricultural propaganda and also some of the propaganda regarding the proposed Fishery Department. As to the allusion to the question of Fishery Department which has been made this evening, I can tell the House that we have made some progress towards materialising the idea of having a fullfledged Fishery Department in the province. One of my friends has referred to a certain confidential circular in connection with Home Guards to the effect that Government recommended to district authorities that only persons recommended by the Hindu Mahasabha should be recruited. I can tell the House that there is absolutely no basis for such a rumour. My friend Mr. Kamini Kumar Dutta has criticised that there is no policy behind the budget and that it is a heritage from the past. Sir, it is impossible to break away from the past. We have got to carry on and build on the past. But as regards the policy underlying the budget, I can tell the House that the policy was to provide for such measures as were indispensably necessary for the purpose of civil defence for the effective prosecution of the war. With the limited resources at our disposal that was the only practical policy to follow. Some of my honourable friends including Mr. B. K. Roy Chowdhury referred to the shortage of quinine. I can tell the House that this shortage has been effected by the cessation of supplies from Java,, and so quinine had to be rationed, which will naturally take some time before they can materialise. The situation is certainly a difficult one but it is not possible to suggest any immediate solution of the difficulty; everything possible however will be done to utilise such supplies as are available to the best advantage.

As regards the Education grant and the apprehension felt by Dr. Radhakumud Mookerjee that the shortage of Rs. 10 lakhs will tell heavily on the expansion of the education scheme, I may tell the House that it has been due mostly to the fact that the District School Boards have accumulated large reserves, so much so that these accumulations throughout the province come to over Rs. 50 lakhs or near to Rs 60 lakhs. The grant to the District School Boards has therefore been curtailed and it is this that accounts mainly for the fall in the Education budget. I would like to say a few words in regard to Mr. Ross's criticisms on the "grow-more-food" campaign. I am prepared to admit that there is a good deal of truth in my friend's criticism and this has been due mostly to the fact that we have not been able to make a survey of the sources of an increased supply of food. The experience now gained will however enable us to carry out our programme in future with better hopes of success.

Some remarks have been made about black markets. I may tell the House that black markets exist all over the world. Even Great Britain is not free from them and even in the Continent there are countries where black markets are a positive scandal. They arise out of the fact that in abnormal times there are people who try to make fortunes out of the misfortunes of other people. It is difficult to control these things, because it is a kind of dishonesty which is inherent in a certain section of humanity,

and what Government can do is to keep a strict eye on their doings whenever they are found; but I may emphasise that it is difficult for the Government to put down dishonesty of this kind.

As regards the food situation, I can only say that it is due mostly to the fact that there is really a shortage of available foodstuffs in the country, which sincere attempts are being made to remedy. I am afraid I cannot say much on these matters having regard to the limited time at my disposal. Some speakers have referred to the question of supply but when this question comes up in another place I hope I shall be able to place before the House what Government have done and what they propose to do in the matter of a more liberal supply of foodstuffs and in control of the abnormal situation which now prevails in the country.

Sir, I have nothing further to add. I am thankful to all the honourable members of this House who have offered valuable criticisms and I can assure them that we shall take those criticisms into consideration and shape our policy in the future accordingly

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The House now stands adjourned till 2-15 p.m. tomorrow.

Adjournment.

The Council then adjourned till 2-15 on Friday, the 26th February, 1943.

Members absent.

The following members were absent from the meeting held on the 25th February, 1943:—

(1) Mr. Altaf Ali.

(2) Mr. Hamidul Huq Chowdhury.

(3) Khan Bahadur Rezzaqul Haider Chowdhury.

(4) Mr. Narendra Chandra Datta.

(5) Mr. Kamini Kumar Dutta.

(6) Mr. Mohamed Hossain.

(7) Mr. Naresh Nath Mookerjee.

(8) Khan Bahadur Ataur Rahman.

BENGAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DEBATES

First Session, 1943—No. 9.

THE COUNCIL met in the Legislative Chamber of the Legislative Building, Calcutta, on Friday, the 26th February, 1943, at 2-15 p.m., being the ninth day of the First Session of 1943, pursuant to section 62(2)(*a*) of the Government of India Act, 1935.

Mr. Deputy President (Khan Bahadur ABDUL HAMID CHOWDHURY) was in the Chair.

Extra day for discussion of food problem.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: Sir, I promised to give the House one day for the discussion of the food problem. In consultation with the Leader of the Opposition I find that on Monday next there is no other business except a Government business, namely, the Non-Agricultural Temporary Extension Bill, which will not take more than 10 minutes. I propose therefore that the rest of the day may be devoted to the discussion of the food question.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: I think two days were promised for consideration of the questions of food and jute.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: Let us see how far——.

Raja BHUPENDRA NARAYAN SINHA Bahadur, of Nashipur: Sir, we have not been able to follow what the Leader of the House was saying.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Hon'ble Leader of the House has said that for the purpose of discussing food question he wants to set apart Monday because on Monday there is only one Government business which will not take more than 10 minutes: the rest of that day may be devoted for the discussion of food problem.

Mr. MESBAHUDDIN AHMED: But it is understood that the election of the Speaker will take place on Monday and we may have to retire from the Chamber earlier.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: If the time is from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. then it would be impossible to have any sitting on Monday.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: In this connection, I would request the Hon'ble the Leader of the House to make himself sure if the Chamber will be available at all on that day because of the election of the Speaker.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: All right, Sir, in that case I will make a personal statement to-morrow.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Cholera in the Murshidabad town.

34. Rai Sahib J. N. ROY: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be pleased to state if it is a fact that there were several fatal cholera cases within the Murshidabad Municipality in the month of October last?

(*b*) On what date was the first cholera case reported to be fatal?

(*c*) What steps had been taken where there had been deaths from cholera to check the spread of the disease?

(*d*) What steps had been taken for prevention of the spread of the disease in general?

(*e*) Is it a fact that several dead bodies had been found to be floating in the Ganges at the bank of the "Satichura Burning Ghat" which lies on the northern boundary of the municipality? If so, when was it detected? How many dead bodies were there and in what condition?

(*f*) Had these dead bodies been removed? If so, when? If not, what are the reasons?

MINISTER in charge of the PUBLIC HEALTH and LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) 10th October, 1942.

(*c*) The houses concerned were cleansed and disinfected under the supervision of the Sanitary Inspector. The clothing, etc., which were considered to be infected, were burnt.

The house-owners were warned not to wash any articles of their houses in the river or by the side of a public well.

The inmates of the house and the neighbours were inoculated with their consent.

(*d*) The municipal drains and all cesspools were treated with lime and phenyle. The water of public wells was treated with lime wherever necessary. The river water near the banks was treated with bleaching powder.

On the advice of the Civil Surgeon, bathing in and drinking of the river water was prohibited by beat of drum for at least a fortnight. Sale of fish, particularly Hilsa, was stopped throughout the municipality for some days.

Inoculation with cholera vaccine was carried out at the later stages of the outbreak of the disease.

The Assistant Director of Public Health, Presidency Circle, also inspected the affected areas and gave necessary advice to the municipality.

(*e*) Only one dead body was found floating at the place mentioned, information of which was received by the Vice-Chairman on 26th October, 1942. He also got information that two other mutilated dead bodies which, it subsequently transpired, were not deeply buried had been dug out by jackals and were lying on the bank of the river.

The dead body found floating in the river was in a very swollen condition.

(*f*) Further enquiry is being made on this point. The result of enquiry will be communicated to the honourable member.

Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state why the inoculation with cholera vaccine was undertaken at a later stage of the outbreak of the disease?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Because it was not anticipated that this disease would break out and it is not usual for Government to undertake to inoculate people with cholera vaccine on its own initiative but at the instance of the municipalities when they think that there was an apprehension of the outbreak of cholera.

Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: At what stage the Assistant Director of Public Health, Presidency Circle, inspected the affected area and gave necessary instruction to the municipality?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: The Assistant Director of Public Health submitted a report which was dated the 4th February, 1943, but his inspection was much earlier—that was some time in November, so far as I can gather from this report—but it is true that the municipality took considerable time to report this state of affairs to the Government and an enquiry is being made with regard to this matter, as to the cause of this delay.

Dr. KUMUD SANKAR ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether there was any arrangement for isolating the cholera cases in the hospital of the municipality?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I do not think so.

Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: Is it a fact that only after a month of the first outbreak of the disease in the municipality in their monthly report the municipality mentioned that there was any cholera cases within their jurisdiction?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: A month after the outbreak. Is not that the question? The report that was given to Government or to me?

Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: In the monthly report.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Well, the information at my disposal is to the effect that no intimation of the outbreak of cholera was reported to Government and no assistance was asked for from the Public Health Department earlier than 31st October, 1942.

Cultivation of rice.

35. Mr. NARESH NATH MOOKERJEE: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture Department be pleased to state if the Government are investigating into the convert lands under jute in certain districts for the cultivation of rice?

(*b*) Is it in contemplation to take steps to convert lands under jute in certain districts for the cultivation of rice?

(*c*) What is the acreage under rice cultivation in this Province? Have the Government any scheme for the regulation of the rice crop and to give effect to it before the next season?

MINISTER in charge of AGRICULTURE and INDUSTRIES DEPARTMENT (The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Hashem Ali Khan): (*a*) and (*b*) Every possible effort is being made by means of propaganda demonstration and public lectures, to secure the utilisation of lands released from jute for paddy and other food crops. A scheme for growing more paddy was started this year and the cultivators were supplied with department and recommended paddy seeds to the extent of 247,300 maunds on the Sowai System.

(*c*) 23,115,000 acres.

Government have no scheme for the regulation of rice acreage beyond pressing their views as to the extent of acreage required.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: With reference to (*b*) is it not possible to make sure that lands which are released from jute are actually cultivated with paddy through the Jute Restriction staff who are already in the mufassil areas?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I think it is possible, but of course, Sir, I have taken charge of this portfolio only very recently, and in the meantime I am formulating a scheme for that with the staff of Jute Restriction Department for the purpose of improving agriculture in the province.

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what paddy acres are required for production of necessary food for Bengal?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I want notice.

Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: Is it a fact that in view of the high price of paddy very great propaganda is required to induce the cultivators to bring more cultivable lands under rice?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Has the honourable member asked for my opinion as to whether any propaganda is required or not? I think it is a matter of opinion. You understand as much as I.

Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that one of the main difficulties of the cultivators is the lack of adequate seeds in proper time?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Yes, I feel so. This year of course it has become already late, but I shall pass order that a programme should be chalked out and a decisive policy should be adopted for this department so that it may not be charged with lethargy.

Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to see that steps are taken so that there is more cultivation of what is called *roa dhan* which can be cultivated at later stages than other kinds of paddy?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I personally cannot give any opinion as to whether *roa dhan* or *bona dhan* is better and can grow in large quantities. I shall consult the Director of Agriculture and ascertain his opinion.

Mr. J. B. ROSS: Is the Hon'ble Minister satisfied that there is sufficient arable lands in the province for the cultivation of paddy without encroaching upon the area under jute?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: As far as my information goes, the area which has been released from jute cultivation can at best be 10 per cent. of total culturable area, but there are lands in this province which lie uncultured for the major part of the year and there are also lands which are full of jungles. We require for the improvement of agriculture and grow more food campaign not only extensive cultivation but intensive as well. I am trying to adopt certain measures by which both extensive and intensive cultivation may be had in future.

Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what methods are being adopted by Government to induce cultivators to have intensive cultivation?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Up to now, it has been only by means of demonstration farms, union farms and agricultural farms at headquarters. Here we have got certain persons who work as agricultural demonstrators who go to the villages and advise the people to use manures for the purpose of cultivation and for the supply of manures at a cheap rate, or without any cost. No action has yet been taken by Government on any new lines. All that I can say offhand is that it would be well if manures at the least cost could be supplied to the cultivators or if the cultivators could be trained to prepare their own manures in their own house with as least a cost as possible.

Dr. KUMUD SANKAR RAY: Is the Hon'ble Minister prepared to consider whether it is not possible to lend the cultivators modern machineries so that it may help to save immense labour and time in cultivating areas which have been released from jute?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Nothing is as yet in the contemplation of Government but if the honourable member means tractors, then I may say that no experiment has yet been made with tractors in this connection and I do not know whether tractors will be useful in Bengal without any experiment having been made.

Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to consider whether or not it is possible for Government to reduce

the canal rates where canal rates are still high, for instance, in the Eden Canal area, so as to enable the cultivators, to make use of the canal waters for intensive cultivation?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur HASHEM ALI KHAN: This matter has not yet been brought to my notice as I took charge of my new portfolio only a few days ago. If, however, this aspect is brought to my notice I shall certainly look into the question and see what can be done.

Raja Bahadur BHUPENDRA NARAYAN SINHA, of Nashipur: Is it a fact that the services of many of the demonstrators have been retrenched or discharged?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur HASHEM ALI KHAN: I do not know.

Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state what steps he proposes to take for bringing under cultivation arable lands not under any cultivation at present?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur HASHEM ALI KHAN: Well, it is only by means of propaganda, persuasion, etc., I do not know what else can be done.

Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that there is a great difference in the canal rates, namely, between the canal rates in the Damodar area and the Eden Canal area, though the supply of water is supposed to be better in the Damodar Canal area and the rate is much lower in the Eden Canal area?

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: I rise on a point of order, Sir. How can this question arise regarding the canal rates?

Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: In reply to this point of order, may I make a submission, Sir? The Hon'ble Minister has already accepted my suggestion by agreeing to consider the question of these canal rates being reduced, and my question arises from this admission of his.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur HASHEM ALI KHAN: Without notice I am afraid I cannot give any answer to this question. I shall have to examine the matter first and then give a reply.

Dr. KUMUD SANKAR RAY: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether Government have got in their possession in their Agriculture Department any tractors lying idle which may be utilised or released towards the cultivation either of the areas released from jute or of areas which had never been under cultivation?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur HASHEM ALI KHAN: I do not know whether Government have any tractors in the Agriculture Department.

Select Committee Report on Bengal Local Self-Government (Amendment) Bill, 1937.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Sir, I beg to present the report of the Select Committee on the Bengal Local Self-Government (Amendment) Bill, 1937, by Mr. Humayun Kabir.

Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: On a point of information, Sir, how long the House is going to sit to-day?

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Up to 3-30 p.m.

Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: It is our right to sit full two hours and we would like to have our right to sit till 4-15 p.m. to-day.

Discussion on Supplementary Demands.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Now the House will take up discussion on supplementary demands.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSSAIN: The first observation that I should like to make in connection with the supplementary budget is this: that normally the supplementary budget estimate used to be presented in the autumn session of the Council. That was the practice for a long time and even in the time of bureaucratic Government supplementary estimate used to be submitted before the House before the expenditure was incurred. I do not understand why this supplementary estimate this year has been presented almost after the year is closed. It is a farce and mockery to discuss the supplementary budget of which the expenditure I believe has already been mostly incurred. The object of presenting the budget before the Legislature is to get the opinion of the Legislature. We have no right to move any cut grant but at least we may discuss the policy underlying and may discuss the estimates that are presented before us. But, Sir, of what use it will be if the discussion is made after the expenditure has already been incurred, or most of the expenditure has been incurred. It is absurd and it is irrational. I hope the Ministry will make it a point that in future years supplementary budget is presented in the autumn session of the Legislature. There was an autumn session last year and I do not understand why in spite of that the estimate was not presented before the Legislature then.

Now, Sir, I will discuss only a few items in respect of which I have some observations to make. I find from Grant No. 11—"Interest on debt and other obligations"—that on account of a loan of Rs. 2½ crores—ways and means loan at 2 per cent. per annum and another of one crore for advances to small growers of jute, additional provision for interest had to be made. I should have very much liked to know as to how this one crore taken in October, 1942, for advances to jute growers has been utilised. I understand that a very large amount of this loan has remained unspent. If that is so, it is not at all proper that we should be paying interest for this amount? We should have made sure about our being able to make these advances before the actual loan is incurred and also there should have been proper estimates before Government agreed to pay interest on the loans to the Government of India. It was a very bad policy and the term under which this loan is to be granted was such that no sensible cultivator could take this loan. As a matter of fact small jute-growers for whom this loan was taken had already disposed of their jute and there was no point in giving them loans now in order to wait for a month or two for the rising of the price of jute.

The result, I understand, is that a major portion of the amount has remained unspent and whatever amount has been spent has not been perhaps properly utilised. I know, Sir, that our people will accept advance of money but whether they would properly utilised the amount for the purpose for which it is meant is doubtful. Therefore, we should have made sure of the proper utilization of this money before asking them to take such advances.

As regards Grant No. 33—Miscellaneous, I find that for control of vagrancy a big amount of nearly Rs. 6 or 7 lakhs has been allotted. Sir, it is very strange that an altogether new matter like this not even a scheme has been shown in this supplementary estimate. The outline of this scheme "Control of Vagrancy" has not even been disclosed in this House. How is it then, Sir, possible for us to discuss a thing of which we do not know anything, of which we had been kept in the dark? We do not know how the Government propose to control vagrants. We do not know what is their policy to control them. It was up to the Government to mention it, to give details of their policy of control of vagrants in the opening speech of the Hon'ble the Finance Minister. We hope, Sir, even now the Hon'ble the Finance Minister would throw light on this and inform us what they are proposing to do by taking charge of vagrants, what will be the number of vagrants, whether this will be in the nature of a Poor House, whether all vagrants—whether he is capable of work or infirm—will be kept there. In fact, we want to know what are the details of the policy of Government. The Hon'ble Minister ought to have informed us of the details of this scheme before placing it to us for discussion.

Then Grant No. 34—Extraordinary charges, under this head we find that Rs. 2,56,000 is wanted for the Home Guard Organization. Sir, we live in mufassil area. We have not yet seen any sign of this Home Guard Organization there. We do not know how this sum is going to be spent and that in the course of these remaining two months. It is up to the Hon'ble Minister to explain to us the Home Guard Organization.

Then under Grant No. 35 in the Explanatory Memorandum—Special advances—Advances to the Director of Civil Supplies for the purchase of food grain and distribution of imported stocks of sugar. Here also, Sir, we have been kept entirely in the dark as to the policy behind this advance of Rs. 53 lakhs that has been made to the Director of Civil Supplies.

We know of purchase of jute during the time of the last Ministry, for that money was allotted in order to raise the price of jute and here we find the purchase of food grains. What is the object behind it? Is it for raising the price of food grains, and for whom these grains are to be purchased? Is it meant for only Government servants, their employees and supporters or what we do not know? 53 lakhs of rupees are to be advanced for purchase of food grains. What is the policy behind it? We must know it before we can be expected to criticise an allotment of such a heavy nature. Then, Sir, we find under Grant No. 36 that a huge amount had to be given out as loans this year also, and for that 96 lakhs 49 thousand rupees additional grant have been asked for. We know, Sir, of the Midnapore disaster and what a tragic occurrence it was? But to

what I wish to draw the attention of the Government is that this sort of palliative measures will not do. We know that our agriculturists are very poor. They cannot tide over even the slightest climatic disaster, and so we must make some provision for them so that they may get agricultural loans everywhere. It is time when we considered the whole agricultural credit problem. Sir, I have been drawing the attention of Government time out of numbers to this agricultural credit problem, but Government is not paying any attention. At least some experiment ought to have been made by the Government to find out if agricultural credit problem cannot be solved under the direct supervision of Government. Money should not be provided for agriculture haphazardly just when there has been a disaster. Sir, I know how these loans are given. If there had been a permanent officer-in-charge of a thana to consider the agricultural condition of the people under that thana he could know which people could be trusted and which people actually required the loan and when the loans should be realised, if we had permanent officers dealing with these matters there would be no difficulty in realising arrears of loans also. I know on account of loans heavy arrears have accumulated in recent years, because, Sir, the chief reason is that Government has not got a sufficient number of officers who may be sent out in proper time to collect the loans. They have got only limited number of officers. Sir, compare the present practice with the practice which was in vogue before. Sir, Government must establish agricultural banks in every thana as an experimental measure. Government should try in one or two districts to find out if it is not a better procedure than the existing one of giving out loans haphazardly. Sir, I have nothing else to observe with regard to this. With these words I conclude.

Mr. NUR AHMED: Frankly speaking, Mr. Deputy President, one does not feel very much enthusiastic over the discussion of the budget or the supplementary budget in this House, because, by Constitution this House has not been given any power of control over the budget estimates. Supplementary estimates generally consist of those items only which cannot be anticipated at the time of framing the budget estimates. These supplementary estimates amount to about Rs. 4,96,000, that is, about 5 crores, or in other words to less than one-third of the total of the original budget estimate amounting to 16 crores and odd. And as a result of this addition the expenditure on so many accounts will be increased from 16 crores to about 21 crores. It is stated in the Explanatory Note that these amounts will be met by reappropriation under certain heads or from savings under certain heads. It appears that this reappropriation does not come from each head of demand. If we take into account the expenditure from revenue only, we find that it would be increased by one crore and more the grand total comes to 44 crores from the original one of 34 crores, that is an increase of 10 crores. And that is why this huge sum by way of supplementary estimates has been presented. Sir, may I ask as to why these sums could not be anticipated? Except one or two items which could not have been anticipated, the other items ought to have been anticipated, I mean except the item regarding the gratuitous grant for famine and flood

relief for Midnapore, and 24-Parganas, and for agricultural loan. The other items could have been anticipated. Besides, we do not know what is the policy behind this presentation of this huge sum by way of supplementary estimates. Is it the policy of Government not to give the members of this House any opportunity of discussing in full the amounts covered by the supplementary budget estimate? They were not included in the original budget estimate? So I find that during the last two years this has been the policy taken up by Government to present at the fag end of the year the supplementary estimates of the year, which handicap the members very much in discussing the estimates, because in discussion of supplementary estimates we cannot discuss principles and other things. So it is not right and proper on the part of Government to present a supplementary budget at the fag end of the year in this way, covering less than one-third of the total original budget. This addition that is contained in these supplementary estimates has been taken away I find from the nation building departments, I mean they are mostly derived from reappropriations from the nation building departments, for in respect of other departments I do not find that that is the case.

Let me say a few words as to how the expenditure under the nation building departments has been curtailed in the revised budget estimate which is embodied in these supplementary estimates. There has been a reduction under Education of about Rs. 11,62,000, of Rs. 80,000 under Medical and Rs. 10 lakhs for Public Health, Rs. 1,08,000 under Co-operation, Rs. 1,12,000 under Industries and Rs. 45 lakhs under Civil Works.

The total is about 74 lakhs. Sir, this is most disappointing. Now, Sir, going through the estimates one by one I will try to show that this expenditure could have been anticipated at the time when the budget was prepared and it could have been provided in the original budget.

As regards Grant No. 1 it shows that it is a new grant and there was no amount shown in the original budget—the grant is for the encouragement of the manufacture of salt as a cottage industry. On this subject a resolution had been unanimously adopted in this House and Government was promisebound to encourage this industry; but a petty sum has been provided and that is only for the construction of warehouses and for staff in Contai and Tamluk in the Midnapore district and Diamond Harbour in the 24-Parganas. May I say that Chittagong is also very suitable for the manufacture of salt? But no money has been provided for Chittagong. In this connection may I appeal to the Hon'ble Minister to see that Chittagong is not accorded a step-motherly treatment. Sir, it appears that Chittagong has been neglected in this respect. If the Hon'ble Minister goes to Chittagong he will find there that a large number of people are living on the manufacture of salt. But no encouragement is forthcoming from Government and the people are manufacturing salt for their livelihood with great difficulty.

The second point on which I wish to draw the attention of the House is the grant under "Provincial Excise". Under this head no expenditure could be increased but there is a supplementary grant of Rs. 1,19,000. It

will be seen that out of this, Rs. 13,000 has been provided for the cost of opium supplied to Provincial Excise Department. It is a known fact that consumption of opium is on the increase in Bengal to the consternation of all the people of Bengal. No attempt to curtail the consumption of opium is made by the Government. On the other hand Government is prepared to supply as large a quantity of opium as required for the people! Is it beneficial, is it for the good of the people?

This amount of Rs. 71,000 has been taken out from an important item, viz., Irrigation. Sir, irrigation is absolutely necessary for the expansion of cultivation in Bengal. In respect of irrigation Bengal stands nowhere in comparison to other provinces of India. The percentage of cultivated area is 1 per cent. in Bengal, whereas it is 76 per cent. in Sind and 46 per cent. in the Punjab. It is very regrettable that reduction has been made under this head in order to prepare embankments in Midnapore area.

Under Grant No. 11—Interest on loans and advances taken from the Central Government. Rupees 1 crore was taken from the Government of India for advances to small growers of jute. About this much criticism has been made in the press and elsewhere. These loans and advances have conferred no benefit on the jute-growers because no timely action was taken when this sum was taken. For at that time the jute-growers had already disposed of their stocks. As regards Ways and Means loan taken from the Government of India, it has been said that this loan will be carried over to the next year. When the budget was presented, it was anticipated that only Rs. 1,03,00,000 will be taken as loans but why a sum of Rs. 2½ crores at 2 per cent. interest has been taken from the Government of India. We are groping in the dark as to the reason for this change. We find all on a sudden that this sum has been taken from the Central Government.

Under the head "Administration of Justice," we find an allotment of Rs. 1,70,000 but it appears that larger expenditure was incurred under this head during the year. A good deal of discussion has taken place over this expenditure both in this House and elsewhere. Considering the time and circumstances, Government should have been very strict in incurring expenditure under this head. It appears that Government were very liberal in regard to remuneration and allowances to the lawyers engaged.

Under the head "Jails and Convict Settlements", a sum of Rs. 5,59,000 has been demanded in the supplementary estimates. Sir, already the expenditure under this head has mounted up. It has been mounting every year. In the original budget there is a provision of Rs. 48,79,000 under this head and if to this is added this additional sum which has been demanded in the supplementary estimates, it will be increased to Rs. 54,35,000. But what is the improvement as regards the conditions in Jails in Bengal? No measure has been taken to reform the jail convicts.

Sir, I find from this note that this sum is required for security prisoners and their diet and other things. Sir, it would have been better if a scheme were prepared for the youthful offenders and put before us for sanction of this recurring expenditure every year. Sir, I hold an example of United Province. United Province's expenditure is the lowest in India, though it

contains a large area and population as equal as that of Bengal, only less by 50 lakhs. Sir, they have inaugurated many reforms and as a result of that their expenditure has been reduced. I from time to time by questions or otherwise drew the attention of Hon'ble Ministers to the reforms undertaken in that province. But up till now nothing has been done, and we are asked to grant more money for Jails and Convict Settlements. Sir, it is a sad commentary on the administration of this province. Sir, I come now to Grant No. 16 under the head "Police". Here I find that a very large sum of Rs. 21,42,000 is demanded as additional expenditure on Police. Sir, the police expenditure in this province is disproportionately large as compared with other provinces. Sir, everybody hopes that peace and order should be maintained at all costs but not at extravagant cost. Sir, as far as I remember our present Finance Minister once declared that Bengal's police expenditure would be reduced by at least one-third of the expenditure that was being incurred under the beauracratic government. But, as a matter of fact we see it is increasing abnormally year after year. Sir, it is being done at the cost of other nation building departments. Sir, a sum of Rs. 40,000 has been put down for Civic Guard Organisation, and an amount of Rs. 18,000 for allowances, honoraria, etc., and a sum of Rs. 5,19,000 has been put down for travelling allowances. Sir, this is very regrettable.

Owing to the prevalence of war the Government of Bengal have to incur a larger expenditure to keep peace and order in this vast province. It would have been better if the entire expenditure under this head could have been granted by the Government of India.

Regarding the civic guards much has been said by the Hon'ble Ministers and the officers concerned but while some of these civic guards do very useful work and I admire their spirit and patriotism, but most of them come from the lower strata of society who do not understand their responsibility. They have been given the uniform and dress of the police and they sometimes oppress the ordinary people under cover of this. In my humble opinion they have not done much good as the Hon'ble Ministers and other responsible officers of Government say. Their main function appears to me to be to gather together to welcome Ministers and officials when they go from one village to another or from one town to another. But speaking from my personal experience I can say that in their actual field of work they are not doing as much good as was expected of this organisation. Let me speak of the civic guards in Chittagong where there is a large number of them under very able officers but some of them, a majority of them, have done much mischief to the empty houses and they have not protected those houses whose inmates had left them, and there are many houses whose properties have been taken away, though by whom I cannot say. They go round their duty from 4 p.m. to 2 a.m. and Sir, it is after 12 o'clock that thefts are generally committed. Some of these civic guards have sometimes also been implicated in these thefts. I may cite one instance. Some furniture from a municipal primary school within the Chittagong Municipality was stolen. I reported the matter to the police and they submitted a report that they suspect that this was the work of the civic guards. If a

further enquiry is made, then the truth of the matter will come out. Therefore my humble submission to the Minister is that the civic guards should be carefully selected and properly trained. Now only constables and sub-inspectors teach them once a week.

I do not think they are sufficient for doing their duty properly.

Under another important head, namely, "Medical" only Rs. 27,000 has been asked for in the supplementary budget. At this time when there are epidemics all over the province when cholera, smallpox, malaria and other diseases are playing havoc on the population and when quinine and other remedies are not available Government has come up for such a small amount. Government should have launched upon a wide scheme of distributing medicines and other relief for the people (here the member reached the time-limit and was allowed to proceed).

Then, Sir, with regard to Agriculture, I may say that the seed distribution is not being made properly. While I was about to start for Calcutta to attend this Council some leading people of Chittagong and its suburb came to me and complained that they have not got seeds for paddy, potato, which had been distributed by Government. Chittagong is the pride of Bengal: Chittagong stands in the vanguard and Chittagong to-day is a much bombed town; but in spite of that no seeds have been distributed to the villagers of Chittagong. I appeal to the Hon'ble Minister to look into the matter and see that Chittagong gets its proper share. Unfortunately this useful measure has not been repeated in the original budget.

Then, Sir, coming to the head "Extraordinary charges in India" I find that about Rs. 6 lakhs is required for the civil defence. It is a useful expenditure. It is desirable that effective steps should be taken to protect the people from the effect of air raid. I come from the town of Chittagong which is a much bombed city. It has been bombed for 14 times: On 12 occasions I was present. What I found after every air raid was that most of the well-to-do people living in the town left the town after the second air raid in December last with their families leaving the poor people helpless: the poor people had no other alternative but to remain in the town unprotected and uncared for. There were very few people to instruct them as to how to protect themselves. There is now a huge A.R.P. organisation and they are working very efficiently after air raids.

But as regards these wardens, well they sit tight in their posts and give no instruction to the poor people. They do not go to these poor people. Due to lack of instructions, when there is an alert sounded, these poor people go to their own thatched houses and bolt the doors without going to the nearest pucca buildings to save their lives. The result is that they are killed by splinters of the bombs dropped. I may cite one instance. On the occasion of the last bombing in Chittagong on the 23rd January this year, three persons died from splinters. But these persons could have been saved if they were given instructions. These three persons were sitting under a tree near a big *nallah* (drain) and there was a strong pucca house near the tree but these people did not go to that house. That house remained undamaged. If they received instructions that at the time of bombing every one should take shelter in a pucca house they would have

certainly gone to that house and thus save their lives. But that was not to be. I drew the attention of the District Officials to look into the matter but they said that they were quite satisfied with the working of the A.R.P. Those District Officials do not care for the M. L. C.'s and M. L. A.'s. So every time there is bombing there is this pitiable sight. If some people are saved every time after the air raid, it is not due to the good working or efficient working of the A.R.P. but it is through miracle that they escape unhurt. I would appeal to the Hon'ble Minister in charge of this Department to see that these *mohalla* people are instructed as to how to save their lives in the event of an air raid.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Mr. Deputy President, Sir, the other day I had to hold an illegitimate baby and this afternoon though not that baby but another baby which has been legitimatized after subsequent matrimony. I am not sure, however, whether it will stand the light well after its first baptism of fire from the speech of my honourable friend who has just sat down.

The first point which has been raised by the Hon'ble the Leader of the Opposition is that the supplementary estimates should have been placed before this House in the autumn session of this House. As regards this, I should say that normally speaking, I must agree with him that that criticism has force, and I should suppose in future years, subject to abnormalities which might intervene now and then, the supplementary estimates should be placed before this House in the autumn session or soon thereafter but this year the situation has been abnormal. You will find, Sir, that a large part of the demand which is being discussed before this House arose after the autumn session. To give just a few illustrations, the extra provisions of Rs. 96½ lakhs for agricultural loans and Rs. 49 lakhs for famine relief were the direct results of the cyclone and flood which visited this province and the cyclone and flood, you perhaps know, Sir, visited this province between the 15th and 16 October, 1942.

Secondly, Sir, the establishment of a Directorate of Civil Supply and the advance of 53 lakhs of rupees to the Directorate for the purchase of food grains were developments which normal human eyes could not foresee, nor could we anticipate that a scheme of dearness allowance would have to be granted. The grant of the dearness allowance is due to two factors over which this province in the Provincial Government had no control. One was the rise in the cost of living, the second was the consequences attendant upon the most insensate form of enemy bombing in the month of December. Sir, I hope after these observations the House will understand and realise the reasons why supplementary estimates of this character could not be placed before the autumn session of this Council. My honourable friend has referred to the question over the control of vagrancy. These are very serious tests and there are so many vagrants about that the members of the Treasury Benches thought that the question had become very importunate. The question of control of vagrancy engaged the attention of Government for some years past and Government intends to bring forward a Vagrancy Bill which will show before this House what our proposals are with reference to this important question. Our proposal is to set up an establishment where

about 5,000 vagrants will be housed. The infirms and the diseased will receive proper treatment and attempts will be made for the purpose of finding work for those who have been cured and who have been cleansed. Schools will be established for children vagrants and infirmaries will be set up for the treatment of the same. I do not purposely dilate much upon the advances to the Directorate of Civil Supply for the purchase of food grains. That question, as the honourable Leader of the House indicated this evening, will be dealt with by this House separately and all enquiries will be answered and all questions put will be answered then. Sir, there is another question which both my honourable friend, the Leader of the Opposition, as well as my honourable friend Mr. Nur Ahmed asked. That is with regard to loans to small growers of jute. This was necessitated by the fact that it was discovered within the course of the last year that the price of jute came down and in order to enable the poor agriculturist tenants to hold over that those loans that were advanced and—I am speaking from memory—roughly about 10 lakhs of rupees were advanced and then it was found that the price of jute had gone up and it was no longer necessary to advance further loans to the jute-grower. But, Sir, these loans were advanced out of funds started by the Government of India and the Centre is not insisting upon a pound of flesh. Now, with regard to Home Guards: I am very sorry to hear my honourable friend, the Leader of the Opposition, to say that his part of the country or the constituency which is represented by him has no Home Guards. I do not know any particular about this, but this organisation has been set up and recruitment is going apace and any valid criticisms which may be levelled against either the organisation or the Honourable Finance Minister as to what measures are being adopted or have been adopted for the purpose of carrying Government policy into action are not criticisms which can be levelled against the organisation and the policy behind the organisation when I am presenting the supplementary estimates.

On the last occasion my honourable friend Mr. Ross made certain criticisms about advances to cultivators. May I therefore give certain figures to the House regarding those advances? In the year 1939-40, the balance on the 1st April was Rs. 64,07,000, advances during the year came up to Rs. 33,77,000. Recoveries during the year for the first six months from April to September came to Rs. 1,91,000 and for the last six months from October to March came up to Rs. 23,41,000, total Rs. 25,13,000. The balance at the close of the year was Rs. 17,52,000. In 1940-41, the balance as at 1st April was Rs. 17,52,000. Advances during the year amounted to Rs. 10,53,000, and recoveries during the year for the first six months from April to September came to Rs. 4,60,000, and for the last six months in the year, that is, from October to March came to Rs. 17,47,000, all told, Rs. 22,07,000. The balance at the close of the year was Rs. 60,19,000. In the year 1941-42, the balance on the 1st April was Rs. 60,19,000, advances during the year came to Rs. 1,06,025; recoveries for the first six months came to Rs. 1,71,000 and for the last six months Rs. 39,43,000, total Rs. 41,14,000. The balance at the close of the year was Rs. 1,26,09,000. In the year 1942-43, the balance as at 1st April was Rs. 1,26,09,000. Advances during the year came to Rs. 1,13,46,000 and recoveries up to date according to the

revised estimate is Rs. 60,12,000. The balance outstanding at the close of the year was Rs. 1,79,43,000.

These loans are granted to the agriculturists in order to enable them to carry on cultivation and these loans are permissible for the purpose of purchasing seeds, plough, cattle and in certain circumstances for rebuilding huts. These loans are given on the security of the land held by the cultivator or on the joint sureties of not less than five villagers including the loanee. These loans are normally recovered in two years. The certificate procedure having been abolished by the combined wisdom of the legislature, coercive measures not usually followed. If any economic distress supervenes, recovery of the loan is usually postponed but the postponement rests entirely on the discretion of the District Magistrate. The agency employed for the distribution of the loan is the permanent executive staff for the district concerned which is also interested in its collection. It has been found by experience that the cultivators realise that if they default in the matter of repayment they run the risk of not getting any further loan in future. This, I am told by the Finance Department, helps recovery greatly. The balance at the close of the year 1942-43 is a very large balance and this is accounted for by the unforeseen events to which I have made reference in the earlier part of my speech before the House. With these observations, Sir, I request that the supplementary demand for the year 1942-43 be accepted by the House.

Mr. W. B. C, LAIDLAW: On a point of information, Sir. Will the Hon'ble Minister kindly repeat the figures of 1942-43?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: The opening balance on 1st April—Rs. 1,26,09,000: advances during the year—Rs. 1,13,46,000 then, Sir, figures for recoveries are necessarily not complete because recoveries are not made for quarters or six months: recoveries are made on the basis of garnering of the harvest: recoveries during the year according to the revised estimate are Rs. 60,12,000: total balance outstanding at the close of the year—Rs. 1,79,43,000.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, order. Now I find that the business allotted for to-morrow has been disposed of. So there will not be any sitting to-morrow. Will the Hon'ble Leader of the House enlighten the House as to till what date the Council should be adjourned?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: Till Tuesday next.

Mr. MESBAHUDDIN AHMED: What will be our business on Tuesday?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: Election.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Council stands adjourned till 1-30 p.m. on Tuesday, the 2nd March, 1943.

Adjournment.

The Council was then adjourned till 1-30 p.m. on Tuesday, the 2nd March, 1943.

Members Absent.

The following members were absent from the meeting held on the 26th February, 1943:—

(1) Khan Bahadur Naziruddin Ahmad.
(2) Mr. Altaf Ali.
(3) Mr. Hamidul Huq Chowdhury.
(4) Khan Bahadur Rezzaqul Haider Chowdhury.
(5) Mr. Narendra Chandra Datta.
(6) Mr. Kamini Kumar Dutta.
(7) Khan Bahadur Alhadj Khwaja Muhammad Esmail.
(8) Mr. Mohamed Hossain.
(9) Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan.
(10) Mr. J. McFarlane.
(11) Dr. Radha Kumud Mookerji.
(12) Mr. T. B. Nimmo.
(13) Mr. Ranajit Pal Choudhury.
(14) Khan Bahadur Ataur Rahman.

BGP-43/4-1200A-750

BENGAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DEBATES

First Session, 1943—No. 10.

THE COUNCIL met in the Legislative Chamber of the Legislative Building, Calcutta, on Tuesday, the 2nd March, 1943, at 1-30 p.m., being the tenth day of the First Session of 1943, pursuant to section 62(2)(a) of the Government of India Act, 1935.

Mr. Deputy President (Khan Bahadur ABDUL HAMID CHOWDHURY) was in the Chair.

Oath.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, order. Any gentleman desiring to take his oath or make affirmation may do so now.

The following member took his oath of allegiance:

Khan Sahib Fariduddin Ahmed.

The Bengal Non-Agricultural Tenancy (Temporary Provisions) Extending Bill, 1943.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJI: I beg leave to introduce the Bengal Non-Agricultural Tenancy (Temporary Provisions) Extending Bill, 1943.

Sir, the operation of the Bengal Non-Agricultural Tenancy (Temporary Provisions) Extending Bill, 1940, will expire from the 29th May, 1943. Therefore, I am introducing the Bill and there is only one clause, namely, for the words "three years" the words "four years" shall be substituted.

Mr. KRISHNA CHANDRA ROY CHOWDHURY: Sir, it is a very important Bill, and it should have been introduced long before. So, though it is already late, it is better late than never, and the people of Calcutta are grumbling for the extension of the time of the Bill.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Bill is introduced.

(Adjournment.)

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: Mr. Deputy President, may I request you to adjourn the House for about three-quarters of an hour in order to enable us to say our prayers and also to transact some of our business.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: Sir, only on the ground of prayer no adjournment is possible. The time for sitting of the House was fixed in consultation with all members of the House and no prayper time was reserved. So, if any member wants to say his prayer, he may very well do so after the election is over.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, a suggestion has been made to me that the House may adjourn for three-quarters of an hour for

giving facilities to members to say their prayers. It is entirely in your discretion, Sir, to adjourn the House or not. But I may say that the prayer has been made only on the ground that the House do adjourn for prayer. I have nothing more to say.

Mr. J. B. ROSS: Mr. Deputy President, we object to an adjournment, because the House was convened for 1-30 p.m. and there appears no sufficient reason put forward why we should adjourn for three-quarters of an hour.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: On a previous occasion when the time for sitting of the House was fixed for 1-30 p.m., we objected that it would be very hard for us to attend the House, because we would have to hurry up our work including saying prayer. But in spite of that 1-30 p.m. was fixed as the time for sitting, and we did not know then that there should be also an interval of 15 minutes or half an hour or three-quarters for paryer.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, order. In the ordinary course of business I would not have been inclined to adjourn the House because anybody who wants to say his prayers can go out and say his prayers and come back. But today a very important business is going to be transacted and the presence of every member is essentially necessary, but at the same time one thing on which I am not able at once to come to a decision is that, the time has been fixed by His Excellency the Governor to hold the election of President and I am not clear within myself as to whether I am competent to alter that timing. I also do not know whether any alteration of the time will affect the issue of the election. However, this point I should like to refer to the judgment of the House and should prefer to be guided by the opinion of the House.

Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR: Sir, I do not like to make more than one remark, and it is this: The amount of time now being spent in discussing the question of adjournment will not probably be less than the time for which the House is sought to be adjourned. A second consideration is that the Governor in his discretion fixes the date of election and fixes the date for a session of this House. But with regard to time, the officer presiding, whether it be the President, the Deputy President or any other member who happens to occupy the Chair at the moment, it lies in his discretion to adjourn the proceedings at any time provided it is within the same day.

Mr. W. B. C. LAIDLAW: Sir, may I draw your attention to rule 4 in this connection, which states that the Governor shall fix a date for the holding of the election? There is no question of time here.

Mr. SACHINDRA NARAYAN SANYAL: Then you support our view?

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: May I take it that Mr. Laidlaw has no objection to the proposed adjournment?

Mr. W. B. C. LAIDLAW: Yes, Sir, I do object to this adjournment. We have in the past week met at 1-30 p.m. and there has been up to now never any question of adjournment for prayers raised.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: May I know on what grounds Mr. Laidlaw makes his objection?

Mr. W. B. C. LAIDLAW: It is on this ground, Sir. The meeting was convened at 1-30 p.m. today, and moreover in the past week we have been meeting at 1-30, but no question of adjournment for prayers was raised. So I do not see why the House should adjourn for some time today.

Khan Bahadur NAZIRUDDIN AHMAD: Sir, a very interesting and complicated point has been raised and it is whether we are bound by the principles of constitution to hold the election at 1-30 p.m. If I am not mistaking it is already 15 minutes to two and if we are bound to hold the election by half past one we have already exceeded the time. I believe that the election cannot take place now if the time of election, namely, 1-30 p.m., is exceeded. I shall cite a parallel example. The sale notifications are proclaimed at 12 o'clock. But it is common experience that the sales take place long after 12 o'clock and even at the end of the day and then it is adjourned for several days. Then, Sir, the only point for consideration is whether it is within the competence of the Presiding Officer to change the time. We think that it does not at all affect the situation. Let us then take into consideration the fact that certain emergency may happen, and in such case we cannot take up the business: suppose there is earthquake just now: (Interruptions from the Opposition benches) will you hold the election in that case? Suppose there is an air-raid just now: (Voice from Opposition benches: No such contingency arises now.) What will you do? Will you hold the election, or shall we not run to the shelter for protection?

Mr. KADER BAKSH: Sir, the argument of my friend Khan Bahadur Naziruddin Ahmad is not to the point. The time of the election has been fixed, and the House should stick to it. Then, Sir, it is not the unanimous desire to adjourn the House now. It is a particular group who wants this adjournment for a particular purpose of their own.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: Sir, is it not a fact that this adjournment is being asked for not on the ground of saying prayer but for certain other thing—because the Progressive Coalition Party has not progressed on certain matter—not coming to a decision on certain point? They have not made any progress in the matter.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: A very delicate question has been raised. I have already expressed my opinion that in the ordinary course of the business I would not have acceded to the request for the adjournment of the House. But today as I have already stated a very important business has to be transacted and every member is expected to participate in it. As the adjournment of the House has been asked for on the ground of saying prayer I think I should not stand in the way. The House stands adjourned till 2-30 p.m. today.

Mr. J. B. ROSS: We have not asked for it.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: We protest against it.

(The House then adjourned for 40 minutes for prayer.)

Election of the President.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Ladies and gentlemen, you will now proceed to elect your President. The following candidates have been duly nominated for the post of President of this Council:—

	Proposed by—	Seconded by—
Mr. Shirish Chandra Chakravarty.	Dr. Radha Kumud Mookerjee ..	Dr. Kumud Sankar Ray.
Khan Bahadur Abdul Hamid Chowdhury.	The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. Abdul Karim.	Mr. Muazzemali Chowdhury *alias* Lal Miah.
Mr. Lalit Chandra Das ..	Rai Brojendra Mohan Maitra Bahadur.	Mr. Birendra Kishore Roy Chowdhury.
Mr. Naresh Nath Mookerjee ..	Mr. Bankim Chandra Datta ..	Mr. Shrish Chandra Chakravarty.
Mr. Amulyadhone Roy ..	Mr. Nagendra Narayan Roy ..	Rai Bahadur Radhica Bhusan Roy.
Mr. Sachindra Narayan Sanyal	Khan Bahadur Saikh Md. Jan ..	Mr. Humayun Kabir.
	Mr. Humayun Kabir	Khan Bahadur Shaikh Md. Jan.
Sir Bijoy Prosad Singh Roy ..	Mr. J. B. Ross ..	Mr. W. B. G. Laidlaw.
	Khan Bahadu Saiyed Muazzamuddin Hosain. ..	Dr. Kasiruddin Talukdar.

I have since received two petitions, one from Mr. Lalit Chandra Das and the other from Mr. Sachindra Narayan Sanyal for the withdrawal of their candidature.

Mr. NARESH NATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, I also desire to withdraw my candidature from the election.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Is it the pleasure of the House to allow Mr. Naresh Nath Mookerjee to withdraw his candidature?

(The House signified its assent.)

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Then there remain Mr. Shrish Chandra Chakravarty, Khan Bahadur Abdul Hamid Chowdhury, Mr. Amulyadhone Roy and Sir Bijoy Prosad Singh Roy.

Mr. SHRISH CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY: Sir, I desire to withdraw my candidature.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Is it the desire of the House to allow Mr. Shrish Chandra Chakravarty to withdraw his candidature?

(The House signified its assent.)

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Then there remain only Khan Bahadur Abdul Hamid Chowdhury, Mr. Amulyadhone Roy and Sir Bijoy Prosad Singh Roy.

Mr. AMULYADHONE ROY: Sir, I desire to withdraw my candidature.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Is it the desire of the House to allow Mr. Amulyadhone Roy to withdraw his candidature?

(The House signified its assent.)

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Then there remain two candidates, namely, Khan Bahadur Abdul Hamid Chowdhury and Sir Bijoy Prosad Singh Roy.

The arrangements for the ballot are as follows:—

(1) The ballot box in which the members are to put their ballot papers may be examined by any member who cares to do so to see that it is empty before it is locked.

(2) Behind the Chair within the screened enclosure is placed a table where each member may record his vote.

(3) Members desirous of voting will kindly advance towards the Chair, one by one, when they will be given a ballot paper signed on the back by the Secretary.

(4) Members will then enter the screened enclosure by the right of the Chair and after recording their votes they will leave the said enclosure by the left of the Chair.

(5) A member may vote for one candidate only.

(6) Members will go into the enclosure one at a time and, with the pencil provided there, place a cross on the right-hand side in column 2 of the ballot paper, opposite the name of the candidate for whom he votes.

(7) The member will then fold up the ballot paper so as to show the Secretary's signature on the back, and leaving the enclosure will, without showing the front of the paper to any person, show the Secretary's signature on the back to the person presiding, and then, in the presence of the person presiding, put the ballot paper into the ballot box, and proceed to his seat.

(8) If a member inadvertently spoils the ballot paper, he can return it to the person presiding, who will, if satisfied of such inadvertence, give him another ballot paper.

(9) If a member votes for more than one candidate, or places any mark on the paper by which he may be afterwards identified, his ballot paper will be void, and will not be counted.

Once again I desire to make it clear that members are to indicate their preference on the ballot paper by marking a X against the name of the candidate for whom they wish to vote. Only one vote can be given to a candidate. Members should not sign or initial the ballot paper.

If any honourable member has not been able to follow the rules which I have read in English, I shall be very glad to explain them to him in Bengali, if he so desires.

The honourable members will now please come, one by one, to record their votes.

(Votes were recorded.)

Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: Sir, now that the voting is finished, may I know who will do the counting of votes? You, yourself, being a candidate, I would suggest that you be good enough to vacate the Chair and ask some one from the Panel of Chairmen to occupy it in the meantime. That would at least look more decent.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: It is not a question of decency; it is a question of rules. I am afraid Sir Bijoy Prasad Singh Roy has not carefully gone through the rules; for in the presence of the Deputy President no member on the panel of Chairmen can take the Chair.

Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: With great respect I would submit, Sir, that you being a candidate should not remain in the Chair and have anything to do with the counting of votes. Besides, I do not think there is any such precedent.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Then who will judge whether a ballot paper will have to be rejected? Who will decide in that case? May I therefore suggest that as you, being yourself a candidate, will count the votes, other candidates also may be present at the time of the counting of votes?

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: There is a misapprehension as regards the rules. The rules provide only for the ordinary business of the House and for ordinary debate. You being a candidate yourself you should of your own accord come forward and should not continue in the Chair, so far as today's meeting is concerned. I would also suggest that some one from the Panel of Chairmen should count the votes. That would be proper and fair and decent.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Will you please refer me to the rule under which this should be done?

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: Well, Sir, it is the paramount and prerogative rule of decency, fairness and propriety.

Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: I would again appeal to you, Sir, that you should, from a sense of propriety, vacate the Chair and request some one from the Panel of Chairmen to occupy it. For instance, Mr. Kamini Kumar Dutta who is the seniormost member on the Panel of Chairmen may take the Chair.

Mr. SACHINDRA NARAYAN SANYAL: I would suggest that there may be two tellers, one on behalf of each of the candidates, to watch the counting of votes.

Mr. J. B. ROSS: On a point of information, Sir. Who is the returning officer in respect of this election?

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The word "returning officer" does not occur in the rules: the word is "the person presiding".

Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: I would again request you not to insist on counting the votes yourself. You had better vacate the Chair and request one of the members of the Panel of Chairmen to take the Chair. That would look more decent.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I cannot vacate the Chair. I can only do so if I go out of the Chamber.

Any honourable member desirous of voting and who has not voted may do so now. (No one having come forward.) The voting is closed.

Mr. J. B. ROSS: Mr. Deputy President, are you going to count the votes?

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Yes, with the help of the Secretary.

Mr. J. B. ROSS: In that case you will find yourself in an extremely difficult position as Chairman. In case of a dispute you will have to make a decision as to whether the voting paper should be rejected or not.

Khan Bahadur NAZIRUDDIN AHMAD: The rules give us no alternative.

Mr. J. B. ROSS: In another place last evening the votes were counted by the Secretary and checked by the Assistant Secretary and the result was handed up to the Chair who announced it. I suggest that that procedure should be followed here.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: As suggested by Mr. Ross I am asking the Secretary to count the votes and then to hand over the ballot papers to me.

(Votes were counted.)

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, order. The result of the vote is as follows:—

Altogether 55 votes have been recorded, but one ballot paper has been rejected.

29 votes have been recorded in favour of Sir Bijoy Prasad Singh Roy, and 25 votes have been recorded in favour of Khan Bahadur Abdul Hamid Chowdhury.

So, I declare Sir Bijoy Prosad Singh Roy as the duly elected President of the Bengal Legislative Council.

Now, I invite the newly elected President to come and occupy the Chair.

(The Hon'ble Sir Bijoy Prasad Singh Roy occupied the Chair.)

Khan Bahadur ABDUL HAMID CHOWDHURY: Mr. President, Sir, as the defeated candidate it is my proud privilege to offer my hearty congratulation at your brilliant success and through you, Sir, I also congratulate the honourable members belonging to the——

Mr. KAMINI KUMAR DUTTA: Sir, I ask for postponement of the felicitations on our newly elected President, because Sir, the time is already up for the sitting of the Assembly.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Is it your desire that the House should now adjourn and take up the rest of the business remaining from today, tomorrow?

Khan Bahadur NAZIRUDDIN AHMAD: But, Sir, we wish to congratulate you at once.

Mrs. K. D'ROZARIO: Yes, Sir, immediately.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Then let us, Sir, be very brief in our congratulations.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: Sir, as the Leader of the House it is my proud privilege to congratulate you most heartily on your elevation to the Chair. By your vast experience of public affairs and knowledge of parliamentary theory and practice you, Sir, are eminently fitted to occupy the Chair. I have no doubt that you will bring to bear on

your new duties the qualities which have shone elsewhere and that by your impartial and wise and just rulings and decisions you will amply fulfil the trust that the House has shown in electing you to be its President, and that your conduct in the Chair will not only maintain but also enhance the dignity and prestige of this Honourable House. I on my part can assure you, Sir, that co-operation from this side of the House will always be forthcoming to you in your labours in keeping order in the House.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, in offering you my congratulation I think I can also congratulate the Council on having secured so worthy a candidate as its President. Sir, your success in the election has been remarkable in that you have been able to defeat your rival, a Muslim candidate, with the help of the Muslim League. I think, therefore, that you enjoy the confidence of all sections of the House. Sir, it was surprising that my friends of the Muslim League who do not very much concern themselves with the interests of other communities and who are supposed to look after Muslim interests should have voted for a Hindu candidate in preference to a Muslim. But however they need not be perturbed, for this shows that they did so on account of the outstanding personality of Sir Bijoy Prosad Singh Roy.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Sir, on behalf of my party I beg to offer my most hearty congratulation on your success in the election. Sir, you are an old parliamentarian and you have got a lot of experience of the legislatures in Bengal and so you are the fittest man to occupy the Chair. Sir, a word of reply to our esteemed friend the Premier: He has said that it was because of your outstanding personality that the Muslim League has selected you as their nominee although you do not belong to the Muslim community. Sir, the Muslim community is always fairminded and they never want to monopolise everything for themselves. This is an example by which we are showing that when Pakisthan comes we will never claim that everything should be reserved for ourselves but we will share everything with others, namely, the Hindus, the Christians and other communities also. This is our ideal now and this will continue to be our ideal when we will attain Pakisthan. Sir, we are confident that you will not only maintain the prestige and dignity of the House but also enhance them. With these words, Sir, I take my seat.

Mr. KAMINI KUMAR DUTTA: Sir, I congratulate you on your election as President on behalf of the Congress Party. We have known you for a long time in connection with the legislatures and also in connection with your filling important functions in the administration of the country. Sir, we hope you will be impartial and do justice in discharging your function which is a very onerous one. Sir, though you did not belong to any party, some of the members belonging to other parties have cast their votes in your favour without being influenced by party factors. The Congress Party in this House does stand in support of all measures which are meant for the amelioration of the condition of the people of this country. Sir, we hope that you will also help us in discharging our functions, and we only wish that in discharging your new duty your sense of duty will redound to the credit of the Province.

Mr. J. B. ROSS: Mr. President, Sir, on behalf of the European Party I desire to congratulate you on your election as President of the House. I associate my party and myself with all that have fallen from the lips of the Leader of the Opposition and of the Leader of the Congress Party in regard to your characteristics. I personally have followed your career for some years and from the prominence and success of that career, I assure you, Sir, that we look forward to receiving from you as President of this Council that impartiality which the British traditions of justice and fair-play have led us to expect from a position such as yours. I congratulate you again, Sir.

Raja BHUPENDRA NARAYAN SINHA Bahadur, of Nashipur: I beg to associate myself with what has been said by the previous speakers in offering our felicitations and congratulations on the exalted position to which the House has elected you today. The recipient of this honour is a valued friend of mine, our relation dates back for good many years and our families have been known to each other for generations together. From your childhood I watched with interest your activities both in the social as well as in the political life of this province and I am sure that under your wise guidance this House will be able to preserve its traditions and prestige. Your past experience will no doubt be a great asset in holding the balance of power even and in giving your rulings impartially. I hope that you will follow the traditions of the House and try to enhance its dignity and position. I again congratulate you, Sir, not only on my own behalf but also on behalf of the party to which I have the honour to belong. I wish every success.

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: On behalf of myself and the party to which I have the honour to belong I desire to congratulate you, Sir, on your accession to the Presidential Chair of this House. It is a valued privilege as well as a high honour with great responsibility and I hope that you being the custodian of the rights and privileges of this House will prove impartial in the discharge of your duty and hold the scales even between the different parties in this House. There are so many occasions for such difference that you, Sir, will need the hearty co-operation of the House in the discharge of that duty, and I can assure you that in the impartial discharge of your duty you can always expect co-operation from this side of the House.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: On behalf of myself and of those who though not members of this House will still have to submit to your jurisdiction, may I just join my voice of congratulation to the speeches which have just now been made? I associate myself wholeheartedly with all that has been said by way of congratulation. We have been associated with each other in the public life of this province ever since 1924. We have been together in the service of this great city and we have been together in the Legislature. And it is with the utmost pride and sense of joy that I feel it my proud privilege to congratulate you as the President of this august House. You today also fill the position of the President of the All-India Liberal Federation, which is an All-India organisation functioning under your guidance and leadership. It is only meet and proper that this

House should have shown its confidence in you, a Bengali holding an all-India position and a man who has always upheld whatever is dignified, good and beautiful in public life.

Khan Bahadur NAZIRUDDIN AHMAD: Sir, allow me to congratulate you on my own behalf and on behalf of this side of the House. The House has made a very wise choice in you and I believe it has selected the fittest person for the job. You have the longest experience in parliamentary practice and you have fully qualified yourself for the position by your continuous and arduous labour, long study and varied experience. Allow me, Sir, to add a personal note to this: it has been a particular pleasure to me to have you as President of this House, as a man of your district. I congratulate you not only as a member of the Council but also as a humble citizen of Burdwan. You have been developing yourself not only with study but also by detaching yourself from the recent party politics. You have developed yourself on non-party lines. So you are peculiarly fitted for the onerous duty which you will have to discharge in this House. Many controversial points will arise but you are today far above controversy and we hope that you will deal with them properly. With these words I congratulate you again.

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Sir, I can speak with some amount of pride that since some years past I had been associated with you—when I did not enter into the political field at all. In that capacity as a humble citizen I got your association at that time when you were placed in an eminently high position. I still recollect that the treatment that I got from you at that time was noble and high. Since that time I think from time to time we met and I can say with confidence that the Chair which you now occupy will be glorified by your performance. I congratulate you, Sir, on your accession to the Presidential Chair.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: As an old friend of yours from the time of the last Legislative Council, I feel a peculiar pleasure and satisfaction to find you in the Presidential Chair, to which you have just been elected by the suffrages of your fellow members of the Council. I know you are well-equipped and well qualified for the task entrusted to you by the members of this House. It has been said by the Premier that the Muslim League has supported you as a candidate in preference to the other candidate, a Muslim and thus neglected the cause of a Muslim. Yes, the Muslim League has deliberately done so and put forward you as a candidate because you are eminently fitted for the high office and because the Muslim League had put forward a Muslim candidate for the office of the Speaker of the Assembly. The League is always anxious to be fair to all. The Muslim League policy is always straightforward, honest and fair and it does not resort to any subterfuge. It gives me particular satisfaction to congratulate you on your accession to the Presidential Chair. On my own behalf and on behalf of the Muslim League I cherish the hope that you will not only maintain the prestige and honour of the Chair but will enhance it. We wish you God speed.

Begum HAMIDA MOMIN: Sir, I rise to join wholeheartedly in the felicitation on your election as President of the Council. I feel confident

that the House has chosen the right man, and has selected the custodian of its rights and privileges after weighing its responsibility in proper balance. I offer my congratulations on my own behalf and also on behalf of the women of Bengal. Your experience as a member of the Legislative Council in the pre-Reform days and also as a Minister under the Reforms will be a great asset; though henceforth you will be a "no-party" man and only the guiding authority in the discussions and proceedings of the House, yet, I hope, whenever there will be any discussion affecting the welfare of women and children you will not be wanting in extending that help with vigilance which is so necessary to raise the status of women for unless the status is well defined and raised Indians as a nation cannot prosper however much we may cry for self-government. Again, Sir, I offer you my congratulations.

Mr. AMULYADHONE ROY: I have always maintained and I do maintain now that the Chair occupied today will be just and firm and you justify the position you now hold by your past experience and long study. I offer you my hearty congratulations.

Mr. D. J. COHEN: Mr. President, Sir, may I be permitted to add to the felicitations that have been offered to you this afternoon? Knowing you as I do I feel sure you will uphold the honour, the dignity and the integrity of the Chair not only to the satisfaction of the members here but also of the Province of Bengal.

Mr. PRESIDENT (the Hon'ble Sir Bijoy Prasad Singh Roy): It is now time that I should adjourn the House to enable the other House to sit, but before we disperse, it is my duty and privilege to offer you my sincerest thanks for the trust and confidence that you have reposed in me by electing me the President of this august House. Need I say that I feel overwhelmed by your kindness and the trust you have displayed. I know my own limitations and I pray to God that He will enable me to discharge fully the responsibilities that you have been pleased to bestow on me.

Now that I have been elected to the Chair, I shall cease to be a party-man and it will be my constant endeavour to hold the scales evenly between one community and another, between one interest and another and amongst the different sections of this House. I hope and trust that I shall receive your full co-operation in maintaining the high dignity and traditions of this Honourable House. I fully realize that the responsibilities are great and the task is onerous, but I have no doubt that by the mercy of Providence and with your co-operation I shall be able to do my best as President of this House.

I thank you once more most sincerely for having elected me as the President of this House.

I adjourn the House till 1-30 p.m. tomorrow.

Adjournment.

The Council then adjourned till 1-30 p.m. on Wednesday, the 3rd March. 1943.

Members absent.

The following members were absent from the meeting held on the 2nd March, 1943:—

(1) Khan Bahadur Rezzaqul Haider Chowdhury.

(2) Mr. Narendra Chandra Datta.

(3) Khan Bahadur Alhadj Khwaja Muhammad Esmail.

(4) Mr. Ranajit Pal Chowdhury.

(5) Mr. Birendra Kishore Roy Chowdhury.

BGP-43/4-1238A-750

BENGAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DEBATES

First Session, 1943—No. 11.

THE COUNCIL met in the Legislative Chamber of the Legislative Building, Calcutta, on Wednesday, the 3rd March, 1943, at 1-30 p.m., being the eleventh day of the First Session of 1943, pursuant to section 62(2)(a) of the Government of India Act, 1935.

Mr. President (Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY, K.C.I.E.) was in the Chair.

Point of privilege.

Mr. SHRISH CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTI: On a point of privilege, Sir. I find that many questions which are outstanding are not being answered by the Hon'ble Ministers, and these questions are long overdue. Our session is coming to a close. I do not know when we shall get answers to these questions and so I request you, Sir, that to preserve the prestige and right of this Honourable House, as our last President used to do always, to see to it so that the prestige and right of this House may be preserved.

Mr. PRESIDENT: As regards the point raised just now by the honourable member, may I request the honourable Leader of the House to state what has happened to these outstanding questions?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Sir, I do not exactly know how many outstanding questions are there? But I can certainly convey the direction of the Chair to the proper quarter to see that the questions are answered as early as possible.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Sir, the questions which are to be answered by the Nawab Bahadur were postponed because the Nawab Bahadur fell ill and so supplementary questions also with regard to these questions could not be asked. May we know when the Nawab Bahadur will come? These questions are pending for more than a week.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: The Nawab Bahadur has just recovered though he is limping a bit, and he has come to the House, but I am not sure whether he will be in a position to attend the House.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Sir, there was a short-notice question which was to be answered by the Nawab Bahadur. This is with regard to food situation which has become critical in view of the price of rice and rice requirements of the Province. This was also more than a week ago.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Did the Nawab Bahadur give his consent to the short-notice question?

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: The Deputy President told us that he sent it on to him a few days ago.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I understand the Nawab Bahadur has not yet given his consent to this short-notice question. So I request the Hon'ble Mr. Basu to find out what has happened to that short-notice question.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: May I enquire of you, Sir, whether it is not a fact that the Nawab Bahadur did actually come to attend the morning session of the Assembly? I saw him actually coming out of his house this morning, but he did not care to attend.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Cannot any Hon'ble Minister answer the questions on behalf of his colleague?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: The Nawab Bahadur will probably attend the next meeting of the House.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Chandibarpur Union.

36. Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR (on behalf of Mr. K. C. Roy Chowdhury): (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be pleased to state if it is a fact that in case of censure motion being passed by the members against the President of any local body, the same President must vacate his position yielding place to a new one?

(*b*) Is it a fact that the members of the Chandibarpur Union (police-station Narail, district Jessore) passed a censure motion against their President in December last, and that the said President is still continuing in office?

(*c*) Is it a fact that the chaukidars of the Chandibarpur Union Board (police-station Narail, district Jessore) are not getting their salaries for the last two quarters?

(*d*) Is it a fact that the union rates for the last two quarters were not realised from the public of that union?

(*e*) If the answers to parts (*a*) to (*d*) are in the affirmative, what steps are going to be taken or have been taken by the Government in this respect?

MINISTER in charge of the PUBLIC HEALTH and LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu): (*a*) By the expression "censure motion being passed by the members against the President of any local body", the honourable member evidently means a resolution recommending the removal of the President of a Union Board from his office, passed under clause (*iii*) of sub-section (*1*) of section 16 of the Bengal Village Self-Government Act. According to the said action the President is not required to vacate his office unless and until he is removed by the District Board.

(*b*) A resolution for the removal of the President was passed in December, 1941, but the President is continuing in office pending the decision of the District Board on the resolution.

(*c*) The chaukidars have been paid their salaries for the first and second quarters of the current year.

(*d*) The answer is in the negative.

(*e*) The decision of the District Board, which is expected to be received soon, is awaited.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: With reference to answer (*b*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state why such an unconscionable long time is being taken by the District Board to come to a decision on this matter?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: That is more than I can say.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: Will the Hon'ble Minister please make enquiries and satisfy himself that there are solid grounds for the District Board not taking action on the Union Board's Resolution so long?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I shall do that.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state if it is not desirable from the point of view of the local self-governing bodies, namely, union boards, that their Resolutions, especially non-confidence resolutions against their Presidents, should be attended to speedily by the District Boards?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I entirely agree.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: Will the Hon'ble Minister please take necessary action in this behalf when District Boards do not take any action?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I am afraid I cannot answer this general question. If any particular case arises then it will certainly be attended to.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: Will the Hon'ble Minister then take notice of this particular case and see that no further delay occurs in the District Board coming to a decision on this matter?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Well, I have already said so.

Chandibarpur Dispensary.

37. Mr. K. C. ROY CHOWDHURY: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be pleased to state if it is a fact that the Hon'ble Minister while answering to Resolution No. 6, on the 26th February, 1942, on the floor of this House, stated *inter alia* "Government are prepared to consider a proposal if and when received, for a recurring grant towards a permanent dispensary (for the villagers of Chandibarpur and other adjoining unions, police-station Narail), after it is established by the local bodies concerned or the local people?

(*b*) Is it a fact that the inhabitants of the villages under Chandibarpur, Singa and Durgapur Union Boards, police-station Narail, submitted an

application on the 31st May, 1942, to the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Local Self-Government and Public Health Department through the Subdivisional Officer, Narail?

(*c*) If the answer to part (*b*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to enlighten the House as to the contents of the said application?

(*d*) If the answer to parts (*a*) and (*b*) are in the affirmative, what actions have been or are intended to be taken by the Government in this connection and on the said application?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) An advance copy of the application addressed to the Subdivisional Officer, Narail, was received by Government.

(*c*) A copy of the application is laid in the Library.

(*d*) The honourable member is, in this connection, referred to the answer given by me in the February-March Session to clause (*b*) of question No. 27. The report of the local officers on the application together with their views on the proposal for a recurring grant are still awaited by Government.

As regards the employment of a medical officer to cope with malaria in Chandibarpur and adjoining villages, I may point out that 10 temporary medical licentiates were appointed by the Director of Public Health, Bengal, to carry out anti-malaria measures in the district of Jessore. The District Health Officer, Jessore, was mainly responsible for the actual postings of these medical officers. An enquiry has been made from the Chairman of the District Board of Jessore whether any of these officers was posted in the villages in question and his reply is awaited.

Disease of Aman paddy.

38. Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN (on behalf of Khan Bahadur Ataur Rahman): (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture Department be pleased to state if he is aware of a widespread disease of the *aman* paddy this year in all the districts of the West and North Bengal, such as Midnapore, Burdwan, Birbhum, Murshidabad, Dinajpur, Malda and 24-Parganas?

(*b*) Has any attempt been made to test the soil and the plant?

(*c*) Is the disease due to a defect in the soil or to any other factor?

(*d*) Is he aware that the principal crop of the *aman*-producing tracts is this *aman* paddy?

(*e*) Have Government considered the seriousness of the situation and taken steps humanly possible to stop its recurrence?

(*f*) Will he be pleased to state the report of the soil test and plant test, if any, and the remedies suggested?

MINISTER in charge of the AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Hashem Ali Khan): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) and (*c*) The disease has nothing to do with the soil or the plant. The damage is the combined effect of Root-rot disease, stem-borers (insect pests)

and Helminthosporium. The last named disease broke out in epidemic form this year for the first time, whereas Root-rot occurred in an epidemic form in the year 1929. This year September was comparatively a wet month with little sunshine and it is thought that these conditions were responsible for providing favourable conditions for the diseases. Disease was most rampant in badly drained fields.

(*d*) Yes.

(*e*) and (*f*) Yes. To stop the recurrence of the disease, the Agriculture Department advised the liming of the soil at the rate of 10 maunds per acre, burning of stubbles on the field, hot weather ploughing and improving the drainage condition of fields by cutting drains, etc. To check primary infection seed-treatment by Agrosan and Corrosive sublimate and the use of disease free seeds are being recommended. Leaflets on the subject are being issued.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: With reference to (*e*) and (*f*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the Department finished its activities merely by issuing leaflets or have demonstrated these things in the areas where this disease broke out in epidemic form?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Of course leaflets have been issued and instructions have been given to the cultivators and we are waiting to see its results.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Has any demonstration been made in the affected areas?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Yes, demonstration has been made in demonstration farms.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister consider the desirability of demonstrating it in the badly affected areas?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I think it should be done and for this purpose—in order to send out demonstration parties in the affected areas I am proposing to increase the staff.

Public Accounts Committee for the Upper House.

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: On a point of information, Sir. I want to refer to a certain matter regarding the privileges of the House. A Public Accounts Committee was appointed but that Committee was never called. I raise this point because I find in the paper today that the consideration of the report of the Public Accounts Committee is going on now in the Lower House. Under rules 108 and 109 of the Bengal Legislative Council Rules we are also to have this Committee to examine the public accounts in this House. What happened during the last budget session of the last Government was that when the report of the Public Accounts Committee was placed before this House by the Government year before last the question arose whether this House should consider that report. In fact it was urged that

as it was a report of the Committee formed in the Assembly we should not discuss it at all. The then Finance Minister, Mr. Suhrawardy, gave a very sympathetic reply and he admitted the right of this House to have a Public Accounts Committee. Some time passed and in the meantime the late President appointed a Public Accounts Committee of this House for the purpose of going through the accounts. That Committee, however, was never called. Then, Sir, I put a question with respect of that. The then Government was then succeeded by the present Government and in due course Mr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee, the then Finance Minister, in reply to a question said that the matter was under consideration and it would be decided in consultation with the President of the House. It so happened that Mr. Mitra subsequently passed away: then, Sir, Mr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee resigned and the matter was not taken up at all. In the Council a short-notice question was also put and a simple reply was given to the effect that it would be speedily decided in consultation with the President. May I enquire through you whether we shall have any such committee to go through the public accounts: we want to know our position with respect to the Public Accounts Committee.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I propose to find out from the Hon'ble Finance Minister what are the views of Government in this matter and when do they propose to meet this committee that was appointed by the late President and I hope to inform the House at the next sitting of the House.

Additional day for Food and Jute Problems.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: May I bring to your notice that two extra days were promised for the discussion of the food and jute problems and on that ground the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Food avoided replying certain supplementary questions? He said that the matter would be fully discussed on those days. I think, Sir, we are coming to the end of the session of this House and we should now know what the Government has decided and what are the days that they are going to fix for the discussion of these problems.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Moreover, Sir, one extra day was also promised for non-official Bills which could not be finished owing to Assembly sitting earlier that day.

Mr. PRESIDENT: One by one, Khan Bahadur. Is the Hon'ble the Leader of the House in a position to enlighten the House in this matter?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: I intimated to the honourable members of this House last week, that I was quite agreeable to take up the discussion of the Food problem last Saturday, that is, the 27th February, 1943. But they objected. Today, also I am similarly prepared to allot the next Saturday for this purpose.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: May I point out, Sir, that it was decided at a meeting of the leaders of the different parties that there should be no sitting on Saturdays?

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, order. It is not the usual practice of this House to sit on Saturdays unless it is unavoidable.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: All right, Sir, some other convenient day may be fixed for this purpose.

Mr. PRESIDENT: May I suggest that Government should propose a day other than a Saturday and the suitability of that date might be considered by the leaders of the different parties?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: I will let the House know it by tomorrow.

Mr. PRESIDENT: But tomorrow there is no sitting of the House. Do you propose to do it at the next meeting, Khan Bahadur?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: Yes, Sir.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: What about the additional non-official day which was promised by the Hon'ble the Leader of the House owing to the non-completion of business due to the Assembly sitting earlier that day?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: Yes, all my promises will be made good but when they will be made good, I cannot say now.

Mr. PRESIDENT: It is not fair to the House. The Hon'ble the Leader of the House should give a definite indication of the date he proposes to fix for the non-official Bills.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: All right, Sir, that I shall be in a position to do day after tomorrow.

The Bengal Non-Agricultural (Temporary Provisions) Extending Bill, 1943 (consideration and passing).

Mr. PRESIDENT: The House will now take up the consideration and passing of the Bengal Non-Agricultural (Temporary Provisions) Extending Bill, 1943.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Mr. President, Sir, I beg to move that the Bengal Non-Agricultural Tenancy (Temporary Provisions) Extending Bill, 1943, be taken into consideration——

Mr. MESBAHUDDIN AHMED: On a point of order, Sir. This Bill was introduced only yesterday and so sufficient time should be given for sending in amendments.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, I will not shut out the privileges which my honourable friends of the Opposition enjoy over this matter, but may I place one matter for the consideration of the Honourable the Leader of the Opposition? This measure, the life of the present Bill, will expire on the 29th May, 1943, and in order to maintain the *status quo*, this Bill has been introduced. As I have already indicated the

other day in my speech, I am proposing that the term of the life of the present Bill, which is of a purely temporary character, be extended for a period of one year. That is all, and I suppose in this matter I am receiving the co-operation of my honourable friends in the Opposition.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Sir, I have a mind to move an amendment that "in place of four years", the words "during the life of the present Ministry" may be substituted, for obvious reasons. The present Ministry is bound not to take up the consideration of such a Bill. Therefore, I should be given an opportunity to move an amendment.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Mr. Chowdhury, that will be very indefinite.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Yes, Sir, but there is a purpose behind this Ministry's not taking up this Bill.

Mr. PRESIDENT: In any case, I take it that it is the desire of the Opposition to move certain amendments to the motion of the Hon'ble Minister for taking the Bill into consideration. So, we have got to agree to certain time being given for giving notice of amendments. What time do you suggest, Mr. Banerjee?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Any time that is convenient to my honourable friends, but do they really want to move any amendments? I hope not.

Let this matter be expedited as quickly as possible. As I intimated also in the last session, every attempt shall be made for the purpose of putting this Bill permanently on the Statute Book and this Bill is going to extend the life of the temporary Bill by one year only. In the course of the lifetime of my predecessor it was given an extension, and during my period of office also I have given it an extension for one year. So I shall once more make an appeal to the honourable Leader of the Opposition to have the matter expedited as quickly as possible.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: If the time is fixed, I think day after to-morrow will be enough for filing amendments.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I have no objection at all, but day after to-morrow is a non-official day.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The idea is that Friday will be the last date for admitting amendments and not for taking them into consideration.

Mr. J. B. ROSS: I am in favour of going on with the Bill straightaway, because it seems to me what we are going to do is what we did last year, namely, extending the Bill for another year. But as it is a very short Bill, it seems to me that there is no scope for amendment at all.

Mr. KRISHNA CHANDRA ROY CHOWDHURY: So far as this side of the House is concerned, we have no objection to discuss the Bill here to-day. The Bill is hanging indefinitely for a long time already and is causing discontent to the public who are interested in this Bill.

Mr. PRESIDENT: As the Opposition insists on having time for moving amendments, the best course would be to give time till 3 p.m. to-morrow.

Mr. KRISHNA CHANDRA ROY CHOWDHURY: When will the Bill then come up for discussion?

Mr. PRESIDENT: Monday. Friday is for non-official business and so I think it would be convenient for us to take up the Bill on Monday next. Are you, Mr. Banerjee, agreeable to this?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I have no objection, Sir. But I would appeal to honourable the Leader of the Opposition to consider if it is at all necessary, because there is only one clause in the Bill. So I do not see, Sir, what scope for amendment there is. But if the honourable Leader of the Opposition insists on his constitutional rights, then of course I must submit.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The House stands adjourned till 2-15 p.m. on Friday.

Adjournment.

The Council then adjourned till 2-15 p.m. on Friday, the 5th March, 1943.

Members absent.

The following members were absent from the meeting held on the 3rd March, 1943:—

(1) Khan Bahadur Naziruddin Ahmad.
(2) Mr. Humayun Reza Chowdhury.
(3) Khan Bahadur Rezzaqul Haider Chowdhury.
(4) Mr. Narendra Chandra Datta.
(5) Mr. Mohamed Hossain.
(6) Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan.
(7) Mr. J. McFarlane.
(8) Mr. Ranajit Pal Chowdhuri.
(9) Khan Bahadur Ataur Rahman.
(10) Dr. Kumud Sankar Ray.
(11) Mr. Birendra Kishore Roy Chowdhury.
(12) Rai Sahib Jatindra Mohan Sen.

BGP-43/4-1239A-750

BENGAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DEBATES

First Session, 1943—No. 12.

THE COUNCIL met in the Legislative Chamber of the Legislative Building, Calcutta, on Friday, the 5th March, 1943, at 2-15 p.m., being the twelfth day of the First Session of 1943, pursuant to section 62 (*2*) (*a*) of the Government of India Act, 1935.

Mr. President (Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY, K.C.I.E.) was in the Chair.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Appointment of Director of Public Health.

38. Khan Bahadur ABDUL HAMID CHOWDHURY (on behalf of Mr. Moazzemali Chowdhury): Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be pleased to state if it is a fact—

(*a*) that the Communal Ratio Officer decided that according to the rules the next appointment to the office of the Director of Public Health should go to a Muslim;

(*b*) that in contravention of the said decision, the vacancy in the said post has been advertised throwing it open to the candidates of all communities; and

(*c*) if the answer to the above question be in the affirmative, what are the reasons for overriding the decision of the Communal Ratio Officer?

MINISTER in charge of the PUBLIC HEALTH and LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu): (*a*) No.

(*b*) and (*c*) Do not arise.

Khan Bahadur ABDUL HAMID CHOWDHURY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he has seen the file himself?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Yes.

Wakf Bill.

40. Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN (on behalf of Khan Sahib Abdul Aziz): (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to state if it is a fact that more than three years ago the Government promised to introduce a comprehensive Wakf Bill in the Legislature?

(*b*) Has any draft been drawn up?

(*c*) Why is no action being taken to introduce the Bill?

(*d*) Are the Governmeent aware that under the present Act the Wakf Commissioner has practically no powers to control the *mutwallis* who do not discharge their duties properly?

(*e*) How many Wakf Estates have been enrolled in Bengal?

(*f*) On an average how many of them were audited annually during last three years?

MINISTER in charge of the EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. Abdul Karim): (*a*) to (*c*) Proposals for amendment of the Bengal Wakf Act, 1934, in order to remove its various defects were received from the Commissioner of Wakfs and Government took up consideration of the matter; but further action had to be stayed in view of the war.

(*d*) Yes.

(*e*) 9,599.

(*f*) 500.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The Hon'ble Minister who is to reply to this question being absent, I am afraid this question will have to stand over.

Jute acreage.

41. Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether any tentative decisions have been arrived at as to the question of acreage to be placed under jute in Bengal in the next season, and if so, what are those decisions;

(*b*) what was the total acreage which was placed under jute cultivation last year in Bengal, and what was the total acreage under paddy last year in this Province;

(*c*) whether it is a fact that Bengal is a deficit province in respect of her vital food supplies and that import of paddy and of rice to Bengal from Burma has been stopped; and

(*d*) if so, what steps have the Government adopted or intend to adopt to make Bengal self-sufficient in the matter of her foodstuffs?

MINISTER in charge of the AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Hashem Ali Khan): (*a*) The area to be licensed for jute in 1943 has been fixed at one-half of the 1940 recorded acreage as revised in 1941 (5,399,285 acres).

(*b*) The acreage under jute and paddy respectively last year was—

Jute—2,712,940 acres.

Paddy—23,164,000 acres approximately.

(*c*) Bengal grows enough rice to meet its requirements in normal times provided the weather is favourable; but in respect of wheat, pulses, sugar or *gur* and mustard, the Province is not self-sufficient.

Import of paddy and rice from Burma has been stopped.

(*d*) Schemes have been sanctioned by Government for increased production of paddy, pulses, oil-seeds, potatoes and English vegetables, and every effort is being made through intensive propaganda by all Government agencies and others to bring new lands under cultivation.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state if the action taken is being confined only to paper propaganda?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: No, Sir, not merely by means of propaganda. In demonstration farms and in union board farms practical and experimental demonstrations are made for the benefit of cultivators.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: What steps have been taken to ensure an extended cultivation of these crops?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Propaganda has started only this year. So I cannot as yet say if any steps have been taken to ensure extended cultivation but steps are being taken so that vigorous attempts may be made for growing more food crops.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Is there any scheme for that?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Sir, I have just formulated a scheme and it is under consideration and it has not yet been circulated.

Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR: Arising out of (*d*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is the intention of the Government to use the jute propaganda officer to see that more than half the total acreage is not utilised for jute?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Government have already issued a communique stating clearly that half the quantity is the maximum acreage beyond which cultivators cannot grow jute and if they do so they will be penalised; but they can grow jute on less than half the acreage if they like; if they do so they will not be brought to book by the authorities. Secondly, jute will be grown on lands which are only for jute and other lands must be utilised for growing other crops and not jute.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: With reference to (*a*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what was the quota advised by the Advisory Committee this year?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: There was a difference of opinion in the Advisory Committee: the majority supported four annas.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: What was the reason for accepting the figure which was against the recommendation of the majority members?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: After due calculation of the past statistics and figures and future expectations with regard to transport facilities from foreign countries, etc., it has been found necessary to fix the maximum at eight annas; but it does not mean that the people will be forced to grow jute up to the maximum limit of eight annas. It is expected that with the co-operation and active propaganda of the members of both Houses of the Legislature and of the general public who take a keen interest in the welfare of the agriculturists, this acreage can be reduced to four annas even.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Has there been any improvement in the transport facilities and is there any chance of improvement in the near future?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: It has improved a little and I hope there will be considerable improvement in the near future and transport facilities would be available now as the war has taken a favourable turn.

Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the Government of Bengal has received assurance or even hopes from the Government of India with regard to the minimum price of jute?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Yes, the Government of India have given us assurance that in case the cultivators do not get fair price and if the Provincial Government think that it is necessary that financial help should be given to the cultivators then they would be quite willing to help the Provincial Government: of course they stated at the same time that a case should be made out in that case at an early stage. We have also got assurance from the Jute Mills Association and the Industrial Association that they will also help in the matter of fair price reaching to the actual grower.

Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the assistance offered by the Government of India is in the form of loans being granted to the agriculturists or in the form of a minimum price being guaranteed to the cultivators?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: No, no minimum price will be guaranteed by the Government of India: that is the concern of the Provincial Government and they will see that a minimum price is fixed before the jute is placed in the market. The Central Government will help the Provincial Government with finance.

Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if, in view of the abnormal rise in the price of rice and other foodstuff, Government will consider the desirability of lowering the price of other foodstuff in proportion?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Yes, certainly Government will look into it.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: The Government of India gave financial help last year and the Government gave hopes of financial help but the money could not be utilised last year. Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether this will not happen this year also?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Of course I cannot assure the honourable member, but I expect that this will not happen this year.

Mr. KADER BAKSH: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he has got figures of the acreage of jute cultivation district by district?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I am afraid without notice I cannot supply this information.

Increase in price of cotton yarn.

42. **Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture Department be pleased to state what is the cause of abnormal increase in the price of cotton yarn this year?

(*b*) Has there been any dearth of cotton, and if so, why?

(*c*) What is Bengal's annual requirement and its production of cotton?

(*d*) What do the Government propose to do to increase cotton production in Bengal or how do they propose to meet the deficit?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: (*a*) and (*b*) The production of long staple cotton in India is not sufficient to meet the requirements of Indian mills. Before the war, this deficit was met by imports of such cotton from other countries. Now, during the period of the war, imports have been greatly reduced owing to shipping difficulties. This shortage of supply from abroad and transport difficulties experienced in India due to shortage of wagons have caused an abnormal rise in the price of raw cotton in India especially in provinces like Bengal which normally does not produce long staple cotton. High freightage and labour charges, the very great increase in price of essential mill materials necessary for the making of the yarn and increased demands by the Military have also contributed to the rise.

(*c*) Bengal produces about 25,000 bales of 400 lbs. each on the average, but it is practically entirely short staple cotton, which is not suitable for spinning in the mills. I have no information about Bengal's annual requirements.

(*d*) With the idea of exploring the possibilities of producing long staple cotton in Bengal, Government in collaboration with the Bengal Millowners' Association started a scheme in 1938, and during the last four years of trial, it has been proved that Bengal can grow long staple cotton on certain highland areas of the districts of Rangpur, Murshidabad, Nadia, Midnapore and Bankura, provided suitable varieties are tried. The scheme is about to close this year, but recently the Indian Central Cotton Committee have sanctioned a scheme to continue such exploratory work for 3 more years to find out

definitely the most suitable variety of cotton, the time of sowing, the best spacing to be adopted and such other agronomic requirements of the cotton plant in relation to Bengal conditions. After definite information has been obtained by further trials, the question of cultivation on a large scale will be taken up. Several years of trial are necessary for the successful introduction, acclimatisation and extension of cultivation of a new crop like long staple cotton in Bengal.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Arising out of answer (*d*), has this experiment of growing long staple cotton been tried in the districts of Rangpur, Murshidabad, Nadia, Midnapore and Bankura?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: It has been tried only this year and not before.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: What was the proportion of imported long staple cotton that used to come from other countries in normal times?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Imports and exports are the concern of the Department of Commerce. I am sorry I cannot give the figure.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: But the Hon'ble Minister has already said in answers to (*a*), (*b*) and (*e*) that "Before the war, this deficit was met by imports of such cotton from other countries. Now, during the period of the war, imports have been greatly reduced....."

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Yes, that is true, we have practically no long staple cotton in Bengal.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Has this experiment of growing long staple cotton been tried in the hilly areas of Mymensingh and Dacca?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I cannot say that off-hand.

Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR: In view of the fact that long staple cotton is not available in this province, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps Government have taken to utilize short staple cotton through the use of spinning wheels?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I am sorry, no attempt has been made to utilize this short staple cotton through the spinning wheels.

Mr. KRISHNA CHANDRA ROY CHOWDHURY: With reference to answers (*a*), (*b*) and (*e*), is the Hon'ble Minister aware that Japan used to purchase one-third of Indian cotton and two-thirds used to be utilised by our mills here? Now that exports to Japan have been stopped, what has happened to that one-third of the Indian cotton?

Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR: Japan used to buy short staple cotton.

Raja Bahadur BHUPENDRA NARAYAN SINHA, of Nashipur: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the result of the scheme which has been tried and which is going to be closed in this year?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: The honourable member will find that that scheme is not to close this year because "recently the Indian Central Cotton Committee have sanctioned a scheme to continue such exploratory work for three more years to find out .....". So the scheme will continue.

Jute Regulation Department.

43. Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) what was the total cost of the Jute Regulation Department (*i*) for the preparation of the records, and (*ii*) for the regulation during 1939-40, 1940-41 and 1941-42, respectively;

(*b*) what is the duty of the staff of this department from April to December;

(*c*) whether it is necessary to retain licensing staff for more than 3 months; and

(*d*) what rural development works the jute staff have actually done during last year?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: (*a*)—

Year.	For preparation of records.	For regulation.
	Rs.	Rs.
1939-40	7,47,872	Nil.
1940-41	11,66,215	10,88,274
1941-42	....	31,29,926*

(*b*) *I.—Beginning of May to end of July.*

(1) Preparation of the bujharat statement in which all the plots selected by the growers for the season are entered in their respective licences and rearranged in order of their serials in the Settlement Record of Rights.

(2) Necessary notification and actual plot to plot checking.

(3) Service of notices in cases of excess sowings, voluntary destruction of the excess crop and failing that, regular prosecution.

II.—Beginning of August to middle of October.

(1) Collection of the statistics of the stocks of jute held by the small dealers and jute-growers.

*Includes cost of preparation of records as well for which no separate account was maintained.

(2) Crop-cutting experiments in every jute-growing union.

(3) Dissemination of Calcutta prices (work which continues throughout the year).

III.—Middle of October to the end of December—end of April.

(1) Preparation and publication of preliminary statements fixing the quota of each individual jute-grower under sections 9 and 10 of the Jute Regulation Act.

(2) Collection of licences from the jute-growers and entering the plots selected for growing jute in his licence.

(3) Actual demarcation of portions of plots where whole plots are not selected, so as to keep area within the quota fixed for the year.

(4) Confirmation of these licences by the Union Jute Committees.

(5) Disposal of section 10(*2*) cases for change of licensed plots during the season.

(*c*) Yes.

(*d*) (1) Establishment of new Pallimongal Samitis.

(2) Introduction of a system of Provident Fund Account for members of these Samitis.

(3) Introduction of a scheme for voluntary national labour roster for the work of village development.

(4) Training of village volunteers in the methods of rural reconstruction, adult education, sanitation, etc.

(5) Establishment of co-operative stores and village agricultural demonstration farms.

(6) Propaganda in connection with "Grow More Food" campaign, and other works.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: With reference to (*a*) it is found that in the year 1940-41 Rs. 22,54,489 were spent on preparation of records and regulation taken together, whereas in the year 1941-42, although there was no preparation of records, Rs. 31,29,926 were spent only on regulation. Is that the fact?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Yes, that is the fact.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Why this exorbitant expenditure was incurred only for regulating the jute?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Because the same staff had to be maintained and part of the money was spent for preparation of records and the rest for regulation, and from 1941-42 when the records were finally published and there was no necessity for preparing them, all the times of these officers were utilised on the regulation work and also on rural reconstruction work.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Is it not a fact that records were prepared once in 1939-40 but they were set aside?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Yes, the preparation of records began in 1939-40 but owing to certain objections being raised in the Assembly, that was annulled. Preparation of records was taken up for the second time and it was completed in that year. After 1940 there has been no necessity for preparation of records.

Khan Bahadur ABDUL HAMID CHOWDHURY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to look at the foot-note and say if the amount of Rs. 31,29,926 also includes the cost of preparation of records?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I said that records were prepared in the year 1940-41 and part of the work was continued in 1941-42 as well; but the officers who did this work were also employed for regulation work, so practically the same staff had to be maintained and the total cost was shown in one place for regulation.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister please enquire if after the month of March there can be any preparation of records because jute-growing commences in the month of February?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: After March? Why not? I do not think there is any bar to any such preparation of records after March or even after April.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Can there be any preparation of records for the records must have been completed in 1940-41 in order that licenses may be issued by March for the year 1941-42.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Well, Sir, the records were duly completed but there were some defects discovered in the following year also.

Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state if it is not a fact that after the survey of 1940-41 certain amendments were made to the Jute Regulation Act and as a result new lands had to be recorded in 1941-42?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Yes.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: What is the percentage of such new lands?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I cannot say off-hand.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: With regard to answer (*b*) I (*1*), is the re-arrangement in order of their serials in the Settlement Record of Rights" at all necessary?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: That was done as it was thought necessary by the department which did it. I am not expert in the matter and therefore I cannot say if it was necessary.

Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state what explains this increase of ten lakhs for the preparation and regulation of jute acreage between the years 1940-41 and 1941-42? What additional work was undertaken by Government which accounts for this additional 10 lakhs?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I want notice. I have got no papers with me to answer this question.

Director of Agriculture.

44. Dr. KASIRUDDIN TALUKDAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) for how long the present Director of Agriculture has been holding his post;

(*b*) when will his term of office expire;

(*c*) whether there is any such rule of Government that no officer should hold the same post in the same place for more than five years;

(*d*) if so, whether the five years' limit does not apply to the post of the Director of Agriculture, and if not, why not; and

(*e*) if the present Director of Agriculture has initiated any important and useful schemes during his term of office, and if so, what are they?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: (*a*) Since January, 1937.

(*b*) July, 1945.

(*c*) and (*d*) There is such a rule but it does not apply to officers holding posts requiring technical qualifications.

(*e*) Schemes dealing with the following subjects in addition to several which are now before Government:—

Sugarcane Insect Pests.
Cultivation of Long Staple Cotton.
Multiplication of fodder seeds.
Multiplication of mustard seeds.
Flax Demonstration.
Establishment of Poultry Multiplication Centres.
Distribution of Improved Ploughs.
Extension of departmental paddy.
Distribution of seeds of mustard, lentil and gram on Sowai System.
Bengal Agricultural Institute.
Soil Survey.
Large scale sugarcane distribution.
Education in Secondary Agricultural Schools.
New system of demonstration.
Increase in research staff.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state if the Director of Agriculture has not got technical advisers under him?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Yes, he has got.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Is he not the executive Head of a Department?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Yes, he is the Head of the Agriculture Department.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: As the head of a Department does he not come under the rules regarding Departmental Heads, rules by which they are transferred after five years?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I have already said that in (*c*). He has technical officers under him but they are not fit to occupy the post of Director of Agriculture.

Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state what are the technical qualifications of the present Director?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Without notice I cannot say that. I do not know.

Dr. KUMUD SANKAR ROY: How many of the schemes that have been prepared by the Director of Agriculture as stated in answer (*e*), have been given effect to and have been adopted by Government?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Well, all these schemes are now being tried out.

Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR: Are we to understand from this answer that not a single scheme of the Director has been given effect to as yet?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: That is not correct. The Dacca Agricultural Institute and some other schemes of the Director have been given effect to.

Wages of labourers.

12. Mr. LATAFAT HOSSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) at what rates the prices of rice, wheat and cloth have increased within the last 12 months;

(*b*) at what rate increase in wages has been allowed to (*i*) the wage-earners in the mills of the industrial areas, and (*ii*) the agricultural labourers in the rural areas of Bengal;

(*c*) what was the normal monthly rate of wages of an ordinary millhand in 1940-41 and what is it now; and

(*d*) what was the normal daily rate of an agricultural labourer of Bengal in 1940-41 and what is it now?

MINISTER in charge of the COMMERCE, LABOUR and INDUSTRIES DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) The percentage increase in the price of rice during the last 12 months is approximately 114·6; that of wheat (average of *atta* and flour) is 269·2; that of cloth (Standard coarse) is 104·5.

(*b*) (*i*) The rate of increase is not uniform but increases have been allowed in engineering firms roughly by 26 per cent. in basic wages. In the jute mills 10 per cent. increase in basic wages was granted in November, 1939, and the present rate of amenity allowance is Rs. 1-4 per week, and supply of foodstuff at Government controlled price is also made.

(*ii*) I have no information.

(*c*) The question is vague. Rates of wages vary from industry to industry. If by "normal" rate average rate is meant this can be collected by special enquiry as information is not readily available.

(*d*) I have no information.

Mr. LATAFAT HOSSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased whether the Government are satisfied with the amenity allowance of Re. 1-4 given to the workers by the employees?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Until and unless definite complaints are made and petitions are submitted to Government, they naturally think that the allowances granted by the employees are fair.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: At what rate the labourers are entitled to receive allowances according to the index of the cost of living?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: I want notice.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: With reference to (*b*) (*ii*) and (*d*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if I am to understand that the Minister in charge of Labour and Commerce deals only with mill labours and not agricultural labour and other labour?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: I am concerned with industrial labour only.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Are the agricultural labourers then left to their fate?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: As I have said, unless a definite complaint is made no action can be taken.

Mr. LATAFAT HOSSAIN: In view of the present high price of foodstuff, is the Hon'ble Minister prepared to consider the desirability of revising the monthly allowances of the workers?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: If proper representation is made Government will certainly consider the matter.

Mr. LATAFAT HOSSAIN: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that the workers are suffering for want of proper wages in view of the gradual rise in the prices of foodstuff?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Government is aware that there has been rise in the prices of foodstuff and for that reason they are trying their best to control the price and supply foodstuff and other articles at a reasonable price.

Industrial Survey Committee.

13. Begum HAMIDA MOMIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce, Labour and Industries Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) when the Bengal Industrial Survey Committee was first formed;
(*b*) what were the terms of reference to the Committee;
(*c*) when and why was the personnel of this Committee changed;
(*d*) whether any interim report has been submitted by the Committee; if so, when;
(*e*) if the interim report has been considered by Government and any decision taken thereon; and
(*f*) when is the Committee due to submit its final report?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: (*a*) to (*e*) The honourable member is referred to the reply to Council question No. 11 by Khan Bahadur Saiyed Muazzamuddin Hosain.

(*f*) The Committee have been advised to complete the work already done by the end of the current financial year and to submit their final report with as little delay as possible thereafter.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: With reference to answer (*c*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state who are the new members that have replaced the old personnel?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: I want notice.

Board of Economic Enquiry.

21. Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether the Bengal Board of Economic Enquiry is functioning;
(*b*) if so, why no meeting of the Board was held during the last 8 months;
(*c*) whether some enquiries are pending before the Board;
(*d*) why no meeting is convened and no progress report of the enquiries, already undertaken, is submitted; and
(*e*) whether the Government proposed to abolish the Board, and if so, from which date?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: (*a*), (*b*) and (*e*) The work of the Board has been held in abeyance as a war time economy. The Secretary has been allotted more urgent duty in the Civil Supply Directorate.

(*c*) Yes.

(*d*) Of the enquiries pending only the Family Budget Enquiry is urgent. This is being considered along with a proposal of the Government of India for preparation of Cost of Living Index figures for industrial workers in collaboration with Provincial Governments.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: With reference to answer (*d*), is the Hon'ble Minister aware that a very important enquiry in respect of warehouse for agricultural products including jute is pending before that Board of Economic Enquiry Committee?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: I am not aware of the fact but I shall make enquiries.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister also kindly see that in this particular critical time the work of this Enquiry Committee is finished early and its report is put up before the Government at an early date?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: I shall most certainly see.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: With reference to answers (*a*), (*b*) and (*e*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is not wrong economy even in war time to suspend work of the Board of Economic Enquiry?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: That is a matter of opinion.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the present Ministry does not consider it necessary in national interest to see that the work of the Board of Economic Enquiry goes on without late or hindrance?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: That is also a matter of opinion.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: I do not understand, Sir, how it is a matter of opinion. Does not the Hon'ble Minister consider that as a result of the suspension of the work of the Board of Economic Enquiry, because of the work of the Board having been kept in abeyance, the country has suffered?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: I am not aware of the fact. The honourable member knows it better than me.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that the country is now passing through economic crisis?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Yes.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Does not the Hon'ble Minister consider that the Board of Economic Enquiry is the proper authority for finding out ways and means for getting over that crisis?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: That may be one of the ways of getting over it.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: Will the Hon'ble Minister please enlighten the House with what more urgent work the Secretary of the Board has been entrusted in preference to the work of the Board of Economic Enquiry?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: He has been engaged in feeding the stomach of the people.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: Will the Hon'ble Minister please repeat the answer?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Well, feeding your stomach.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: Does the Hon'ble Minister want to say that he is feeding our stomach but that his own stomach is going unattended to?

Price of rice.

22. Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR (on behalf of Mr. Birendra Kishore Roy Chowdhury): Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) if he is aware that the purchase of rice at controlled prices at the controlled shops in the city of Calcutta involves considerable waiting and imposes much hardship upon the buyers;

(*b*) if so; if the Government are considering a large increase in the number of these control shops and an extension in the hours of work of these shops;

(*c*) what is the quantity of rice which has so far been sold from these controlled shops at controlled prices; and

(*d*) if the Government propose to increase the monthly quota of this rice to be sold at controlled prices?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: (*a*) Yes; purchase of rice from controlled shops involves some waiting in queues.

(*b*) and (*d*) The number of controlled shops as well as the weekly quota of rice allotted to each shop is limited by the quantity of rice at the direct disposal of Government. Since the recent air raids, however, Government have considerably extended their programme of distribution by making direct supplies available to 25 of the biggest markets in Calcutta in addition to the controlled shops already approved by them.

The hours of work prescribed for each shop are more or less the usual hours observed by retail groceries under the Shops and Establishments Act and no change in these hours is contemplated.

The question of extension of control of distribution is under consideration by a Special Officer.

(*c*) The total quantity of rice so far distributed through controlled shops since their inception is 157,925 maunds.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: With reference to (*b*) and (*d*), what is the object of partial control in respect of 25 shops only?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: I have already said that since the recent air raids, we have extended our programme of distribution by making direct supplies available to 25 of the buggest markets in Calcutta.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Are we to understand that rice has been controlled in Calcutta as a whole?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: I have already said in my answer that the question of extension of control of distribution is under consideration by a Special Officer. Government have taken care to see that the poorer classes of the city get a fair amount of rice at a fair and controlled price.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: What is the arrangement for ensuring that only poorer classes are getting rice at controlled rates?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: A. R. P. officers, our own Inspectors and other officers are posted in these shops to see that only poorer classes are able to get rice at controlled prices.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Are any registers kept for recording names of customers in these shops?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: No register is kept; but a list is maintained showing the number of customers.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Is it possible to find out whether the same persons are coming again and again for purchasing?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: I have already said that A. R. P. officers are posted in these shops whose duty it is to see as far as practicable that same set of persons do not come in to purchase, and also we have our Inspectors there who are always on the lookout that no unfair means are adopted, but how far they are successful in preventing people coming in twice, it is very difficult for me to say.

Mr. LATAFAT HOSSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the same system of distribution of rice is in vogue in industrial areas also?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: No.

Mr. LATAFAT HOSSAIN: Do not the poorer classes in these areas deserve the same treatment?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: The mill owners are already getting for their labour force foodstuffs at Government controlled prices, and it is to the interest of the mill owners themselves to see that their labour force gets the necessaries of life at a very low price.

Mr. LATAFAT HOSSAIN: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that the mill authorities themselves are crying for getting the proper quota of these commodities from the Government but are not being able to supply the full quota to their labour?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: I am aware that the mill authorities are asking more and more quantities of rice from Government. That is one of the questions about control and distribution over Calcutta and the mill areas that are to be decided by the Special Officer.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Is it not a fact that the poorer people cannot afford to lose 2, 3 or 4 hours a day by standing in queues?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: As I have already mentioned this queue system was resorted to as a temporary measure to help the people who found it impossible to get rice otherwise on account of the high prices prevailing; and naturally anybody who wanted to get rice at that price had to take a great deal of trouble and they had to wait in queues for this. This discouraged other people and this system was I believe for the benefit of the poorer people.

Mr. KADER BAKSH: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state the controlled price of this rice which is being distributed amongst the poorer classes? What is the rate at which this rice is being sold per seer or per maund?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: From memory I cannot state the exact figure but it would be something like Rs. 7-4 or Rs. 6-12 per maund, or something like that.

Mr. KADER BAKSH: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state the price of medium rice in Calcutta today or yesterday?

Mr. PRESIDENT: That question does not arise.

Khan Sahib FARIDUDDIN AHMED: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state since when the question of control and distribution of foodstuffs has been under the consideration of this Special Officer appointed in this behalf?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Not more than 15 days or a month.

Khan Sahib FARIDUDDIN AHMAD: May we know from the Hon'ble Minister when he is likely to finish his consideration of the question, so that we may get something definite?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: The honourable member must have noticed that there have been two Conferences at least, held on the 1st and 3rd March respectively and the proposals of the Special Officer have been placed before the public, the Chambers of Commerce and the leaders of the different groups in both Houses.

Supply of rations at controlled prices.

23. Mr. MOAZZEMALI CHOUDHURY: (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department aware that rations at controlled prices are being supplied to the staff of the Supply Department of the Government of India, of the office of the Director-General, Posts and Telegraphs, and of the Central Public Works Department located in Calcutta?

(*b*) If so, will he be pleased to state whethe those Government offices and departments are getting their requirements and rations at controlled prices for their staff through the Controller of Civil Supplies, Bengal, or are getting them direct through any organisation of the Government of India set up for the purpose?

(*c*) Is he aware that up till now no steps have been taken for the supply of rations at controlled prices to the staff of the Government of Bengal located in Calcutta?

(*d*) If so, will he be pleased to state the reasons for this differentiation between the Government of India staff and their own staff in this matter both located in Calcutta?

(*e*) Is he aware that Government of India staff located in Calcutta draw better scales of pay than the men employed by the Government of Bengal, cadre for cadre, grade for grade?

(*f*) Will the Government be pleased to state the reasons for this differential treatment in all matters including ration-supply between these two kinds of staff, both located in the same place like Calcutta?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: (*a*) Yes, but my information is that the prices are not always at controlled rates.

(*b*) The Postmaster-General, Bengal, and Assam Circle, gets some supplies through the Director of Civil Supplies, Bengal, only against their requirements of menials. The Central Public Works Department office does not get its supply through us. The Government of India, Supply Department, has recently approached the Director of Civil Supplies, Bengal, for supply and we have agreed to assist only in respect of requirements of menials. I am not aware from what other sources these offices get supplies.

(*c*) The menial staff employed in all the offices of the Government of Bengal located in the Writers' Buildings as well as several other offices are

already being supplied with foodstuff at controlled prices from a ration shop opened in Writers' Buildings. The opening of several other shops of a similar nature has already been proposed and is under consideration.

(*d*) Does not arise.

(*e*) I have no concern with scales of pay allowed by the Government of India. Scales of pay under this Government are fixed by the Home and Finance Departments and Government as a whole.

(*f*) Does not arise.

Mr. PRESIDENT: My attention was drawn by Mr. Srish Chandra Chakraverti day before yesterday that a large number of questions were outstanding. I have since ascertained: there are three questions outstanding from last session of 1941, 18 questions from the last session of 1942 and 38 questions during the current session. So I would request the Hon'ble Ministers to take special notice of this fact and to see that the questions are answered as soon as possible; especially the questions outstanding from the last session should be answered without delay.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Sir, I have given notice of a short-notice question regarding shortage of rice in Bengal: has the Hon'ble Minister in charge refused admission? I want to know how he proposes to meet the deficit of rice.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Will the Hon'ble Minister say whether he proposes to answer the question?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Sir, may I bring to your notice that I was confined to bed for some days past and my wife also has undergone an operation recently and for all these reasons I was not able to look into the question: I shall look into the short-notice question of the honourable member now.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Another matter, Sir. The Hon'ble Leader of the House said the other day that he would inform the House today which day will be fixed for the discussion of food and jute questions; but he is absent today.

Mr. PRESIDENT: There is another matter to which reference was made by Mr. Lalit Chandra Das, namely, the meeting of the Public Accounts Committee. That matter has been hanging fire for a long time and requires discussion among the Hon'ble Finance Minister, the Hon'ble Speaker and the President: so it is awaiting discussion at a conference of Hon'ble Minister, Finance, the Hon'ble Speaker and the President. That is the present position. I have mentioned the matter to the Hon'ble Finance Minister. He has promised to look into it and I propose to arrange a conference at an early date.

As regards your suggestion, Khan Bahadur, about special day for the discussion of food and jute problems, Government suggest next Monday after the only Government business, namely, the Non-Agricultural

Tenancy (Temporary Provision) Bill, is disposed of and the following day, namely, Tuesday, the 9th March. These are the two days suggested by Government for food and jute problems.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Another day was promised for Non-official Bills.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I have not heard anything about it from the Hon'ble Leader of the House. I hope to take up the matter later.

Mr. SRISH CHANDRA CHAKRAVERTI: Sir, with regard to the appointment of Public Accounts Committee, may I know with regard to which year's budget this committee is to be appointed?

Mr. PRESIDENT: The function of the Public Accounts Committee is not to discuss the budget but to examine the expenditure incurred.

Non-official Resolutions.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The House will now resume discussion on Non-official Resolutions: The Hon'ble Minister in charge of Irrigation was in possession of the House when the subject was being discussed last.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Unfortunately, Sir, the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Irrigation is unavoidably absent.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Sir, with your permission I shall conclude the debate in the absence of the Hon'ble Minister, Irrigation.

This resolution is a laudable one and is really intended to help the "Grow More Food" Campaign. I know that large tracts of lands are lying under water for the greater part of the year and by small irrigational projects most of these lands could be easily reclaimed and brought under cultivation. So, it is the primary duty of any and every Government to see that waste lands should be brought under cultivation either by small irrigational projects or by other means. Now, this question is very important no doubt but it is so vast that it is not possible for this Government or for any other Government to tackle this question so easily even in normal times.

Government have already made some schemes, schemes for helping the District Boards for taking up small irrigational work. In last year's budget Rs. 53,000 was provided for helping the District Boards, in this measure. Government said that they would be prepared to pay two-third of the costs for undertaking small irrigational projects by the District Boards. Some of the District Boards accepted the proposal and some work has been done and there were others who did not come forward to work the proposal though every District Board had submitted various schemes of this nature before the Government.

Government have undertaken another measure, namely, to grant loans to individual person or group of persons who want to improve their lands by excavating tanks, khals or channels. Under this head Rs. 47,000 had

been advanced by way of loans and Government are prepared to encourage this sort of improvement on lands. But I think occupiers or owners of these lands which remain under water and cannot be cultivated should come forward to Government for help in this matter, because, after all it is they who are greatly benefited if these lands are made cultivable. So I would request the persons interested to come forward with their voluntary labour and other sacrifices to help Government in this matter of reclaiming the culturable lands. Government, in the meantime, have undertaken some such works in Khulna and other districts and have already done some work in this direction. Government would, however, be prepared also to take steps that similar small irrigational works are done or executed in almost all the districts. After taking charge of the Agricultural Portfolio, I have already issued a letter to the District Magistrates through the Director of Agriculture to submit small schemes of this nature with the least possible expenditure but I have not yet received any reports from them. As soon as I receive the reports from various District Magistrates, I shall enquire and examine those reports and shall see that schemes which require small expenditure are given effect to without further delay.

Now, Sir, as for the main part of the resolution that a suitable amount should be provided in the current year's budget, I think my honourable friend, the mover of the resolution, knows that the budget has already been presented before this House and there was no time for making any provision for this in the current year's budget. But I shall certainly see that suitable amounts are provided in the next year's budget for this purpose, as the work is a noble and a very laudable one and will be very useful to the cultivators of this province. In the meantime, Government are considering the question of appointing a Committee for investigating into the question of a small scale irrigation by means of portable pumps and tube-wells. On receipt of the Committee's report, we shall see what can be done. In the meantime, the Committee will have to hold its sittings, consider this case and then submit its report. So, I hope my honourable friend, the mover of this resolution, will not press for it, as I have already expressed my desire that I shall try my level best to help the agriculturists with a small scale irrigation. Of course, the time is highly abnormal and the financial position of the Government is already known to the honourable members of this House. So I hope that in consideration of this abnormal situation and Government's financial position, my honourable friend, the mover, will not press for it.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Sir, I rise to criticise the reply given by the Hon'ble Minister just now. Sir, he has been very sympathetic now but at the same time I must say that I do not understand his logic. He says that the proposals made in the resolution are very good and very laudable and so these should be attended to. But at the same time he says that there are so many lands to be reclaimed that it is very difficult for Government at the present time to tackle. So it comes to this that nothing should be done at present. Sir, we ought to have got a comprehensive scheme to deal with this problem. According to the Floud

Commission's report there are about 37 lakhs of acres of culturable waste lands in Bengal which could be converted into cultivable lands. Government could start with reclaiming 10,000 acres of such lands every year by earmarking a certain amount of money for this purpose. Sir, war is no plea. I think it will rather help the war if we can reclaim the lands and make them capable of growing additional food crops. People are very much suffering from acute shortage of food crops. Unless we can provide the people both at home and in war with sufficient foodstuffs, we cannot be said to be properly tackling the war effort. So it will be a substantial contribution to war effort if we really have a scheme for reclaiming culturable waste lands and start with it at once. I know, Sir, that at least in my own subdivision a scheme for reclamation of some waste lands was actually started and it was examined both by the Agricultural Engineer and the Executive Engineer and they submitted reports commending the scheme for Government's approval. But it is hanging fire for the last two years and Government is not doing anything in this direction.

Here, Sir, is a fairly big scheme which has been examined by the proper authorities, and they have recommended that it is suitable and that it ought to be taken up, and this scheme concerns a very large area. By this scheme 10,000 acres of lands can be reclaimed at an expenditure of not more than Rs. 50,000. Now, if we get even at the rate of 10 maunds of paddy per acre, it will come to 1 lakh of maunds of paddy per year, and this is indeed a very good return for the money spent. If schemes such as these are not attended to, mere propaganda for "Grow More Food" campaign will not achieve anything. The experts who have examined this scheme have recommended that it is sure to result in a very good yield and a very good return for the money that will be spent on this account. Now, Sir, if things like these are shelved by Government and shelved for ever, I do not know where we will stand.

The Hon'ble Minister has mentioned that he is going to appoint a committee. Sir, committees mean only the shelving of matters in the Secretariat archives, and it will never come up before the public and will never materialise. We want at least the schemes approved and recommended by the authorities to be taken up at once. Why should Government even wait for contributions from private individuals? When we find that we have been brought to such a pass, we have been brought to bay, we must devise some means and think out how to plan a proper supply of food for the people who are starving. Unless we could do something substantial the scenes of 1770 when one-third of the population of Bengal was almost wiped out will be re-enacted in Bengal in the current year. I therefore hope that the Hon'ble Minister will again consider the matter seriously and will do his best to help to ease the present abnormal situation. Sir, the Hon'ble Minister has said that the budget for the next year has already been framed and presented to the House. But, Sir, is it not known to us that in urgent cases a supplementary budget can come up again in July or October for the consent of the Legislature to the expenditure provided for in that supplementary budget? This is also an urgent matter and I think it could certainly be included in such a supplementary budget. In

the meantime in anticipation of the sanction of the Legislature, Government could get on with the work at least in those places where the necessary recommendations have been received from the authorities.

I hope the House will accept the Resolution which I have moved and I also hope that the House will support me in this matter, for, as a matter of fact the leaders of all the parties have supported my resolution in their speeches.

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: On a point of information. Will you please explain what you mean——

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, order. The honourable member should ask the question through the Chair.

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: I beg your pardon, Sir. May I ask the honourable member through you, Sir, what he means by the expression "next year's budget"? For the "next year's budget" has already been framed?

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Next year's budget may have been framed, Sir, but has not been passed yet.

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: Does the honourable member mean the year 1943-44?

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Yes. Even if the budget is passed, there is no bar to a supplementary budget being presented later on in the year.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, order. An amendment was moved to this resolution to the following effect: that for the words "ten lakhs" in the first line, the words "sufficient funds" be substituted.

The question is that the amendment be made. Those who are in favour of the amendment should say "Ayes", and those who are of the contrary opinion should say "No".

(The question was put and agreed to.)

Now I will put the resolution, as amended, as follows:—

That this Council is of opinion that sufficient funds should be allotted in the next year's budget for small irrigational projects in Eastern and Northern Bengal for the purpose of reclaiming the culturable waste lands.

(The question was put and agreed to.)

Mr. LATAFAT HOSSAIN: I beg to move that this Council is of opinion that the Government should without delay take decision on the recommendations of the Floud Commission and give effect to the decisions within the next financial year.

Sir, cancellation of permanent settlement was the demand of almost all the major parties fighting the last election. In view of this general demand the Floud Commission was appointed to go into this question in detail and to submit a report. The Commission worked for nearly two years and submitted a valuable report making various recommendations. The report

was again considered by a Special Officer and it was discussed at length in both Houses of the Legislature, but the present Ministry on coming to power have apparently shelved it and we are not at all being told if any of the recommendations will be accepted and implemented for the benefit of the agriculturists of Bengal as also for certain other people as recommended by the Commission, and if this matter would be seriously considered and decision taken without delay: otherwise the money and time spent by the Commission will be entirely wasted.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Motion moved: that this Council is of opinion that the Government should without delay take decision on the recommendations of the Floud Commission and give effect to the decisions within the next financial year.

Mr. Nur Ahmed has given notice of two amendments: I would request him to move the amendments.

Mr. NUR AHMED: I beg to move that in Resolution No. 2 by Mr. Latafat Hossain after the words "Floud Commission" occurring in line 2, the words "in general" be inserted.

I also beg to move that in Resolution No. 2 by Mr. Latafat Hossain for the words "to the decisions" occurring in line 3, the words "in particular to the recommendations numbered 17 to 30, 34 to 50 and 53 of the main conclusions and recommendations as contained in pages 176 to 182 of the report of the Land Revenue Commission, Bengal, Volume I", be substituted.

Sir, by my amendment I want to make easy for the Government to come to a decision in the matter. The Resolution as it stands is not comprehensive and Government may find difficulty in coming to any decision and to giving effect to the recommendations of the Commission within the next financial year.

This time being abnormal time. Sir, if my amendment is accepted it will be feasible on the part of Government to give effect to at least some of the recommendations which are of a very urgent nature and which if given effect to will do very good to the agriculturists in Bengal. It is necessary for the information of the honourable members of this House to briefly refer to the recommendations of the Floud Commission. I will refer to recommendations Nos. 17 to 30, 34 to 50 and 53 of the Report. With your permission, Sir, I will refer briefly to those recommendations so that the honourable members might be in a position to judge what those recommendations are.

Recommendation No. 17.—"The pressure of population on the land and the large proportion of cultivators who do not possess an economic holding are the chief reasons of the poor condition of the agricultural classes. In view of the difficulty of extending to any appreciable extent the area available for cultivation, it is of primary importance to increase the total agricultural output, especially the yield of the main crop—rice. This should be done by intensive propaganda on the part of the Agricultural Department, and extended use of improved seeds and fertilisers."

This is a very important recommendation and it should be adopted by the Government at once, especially because there is a huge deficit in rice in Bengal. This recommendation wants the Government to carry on extensive propaganda on the part of the Agricultural Department to increase the output of our main food—rice, and take recourse to use improved seed and fertiliser.

Recommendation No. 18.—"The possibility of extending the cultivation of valuable crops such as betel, sugarcane, tobacco, condiments and vegetables should be examined. More attention should be paid to the cultivation of orchards and bamboo groves."

This is also a very wholesome recommendation and Government can easily comply with this.

Recommendation No. 19.—"The twice-cropped area could be considerably increased if the cultivators were encouraged to irrigate their lands from rivers, *bils*, tanks or wells. Small irrigation schemes are strongly recommended. Experiments should be made with cheap portable pumps."

"The methods of cultivating rabi crops are capable of great improvement."

Experiment should be made in a farm. This very question engages the attention of all people, namely, how to get more food. There is nothing objectionable in the way of Government giving effect to it.

Recommendation No. 20.—"The cultivation of napier grass and other fodder crops should be encouraged and extended."

This is also a very necessary recommendation and should be accepted.

Recommendation No. 21.—"In order to improve the breed of cattle and the milk supply, the supply of stud bulls should be extended. The veterinary staff should be given a thorough training in animal husbandry. The grouping of stud bulls requires careful attention in order to ensure the success of a cattle improvement scheme."

This is also a very necessary and useful recommendation.

Recommendation No. 22.—"The improvement of poultry farming and the possibility of developing subsidiary industries based on milk, such as the production of ghee and *chhana*, require examination."

This is another useful recommendation.

Recommendation No. 23.—"The irrigation problems of Bengal and the deterioration of the rivers should be examined by an expert Committee, as recommended by the Royal Commission on Agriculture."

This is also a necessary recommendation.

Recommendation No. 24.—"The difficulties which have been encountered in connection with some of the major irrigation schemes of Bengal should not deter Government from embarking on further schemes under the Bengal Development Act."

Recommendation No. 25.—"The budget provision of the Agricultural Department should gradually be increased, and the training of additional staff should be taken up as early as possible."

There is nothing against this recommendation being accepted by Government. I admit that expenditure under this head has been increased but not to the extent it requires.

Recommendation No. 26.—"The establishment of union farms should be extended and crops grown on the tenants' land under the supervision of the Agricultural Department."

This is also a very necessary recommendation. This system should be extended by actual demonstration. The tillers of the soil, actual cultivators, should be taught to sow improved crops.

Then comes recommendation No. 27 which runs thus—"In order to provide continuous employment in rural areas, and to relieve the pressure of population on the land, the development of factories in rural areas and cottage industries offers the best possibilities. Government would have to take the initiative in any scheme of development." This is indeed a very good recommendation.

Next is recommendation No. 28 which is as follows:—

"The silk and lac industries should be put on a sound commercial basis". This is also very necessary.

The recommendation No. 29 is as follows:—

"The development of cottage industries is of primary importance; paddy husking which is fast disappearing from many of the villages should be revived. Government should consider the desirability of restricting by legislation the establishment of rice mills." This recommendation is also very desirable and should be taken into consideration by Government.

Next item of recommendation No. 30 is in the following words:—

"It is desirable to keep in touch with industrial developments in other provinces and to send an officer to examine developments which have taken place or are under the contemplation of other Provincial Governments."

Then comes the recommendation No. 34 which deals with modifications in the existing law for enhancement and reduction of rent. Sir, in regard to this recommendation, I put questions in this very House and Government by way of reply to my questions said that they accepted those recommendations and that a Bill had been framed on the lines of those recommendations. Sir, this recommendation No. 34 also deals with amendment of some sections of the Bengal Tenancy Act for the benefit of the agriculturists and also of the zemindars.

Next is recommendation No. 36 which runs as follows:—

"Whether or not a scheme of State acquisition is adopted, the maintenance of the record-of-rights is strongly recommended. The possibility of maintaining records through the agency of a settlement staff attached to each Sub-Registry office should be examined."

The recommendation No. 37 runs thus:—

"Some system of short term credit is necessary for cultivators. Their credit facilities must be increased."

Then recommendation No. 38 is in the following words:—

"Government should grant agricultural loans on a more liberal scale under the present system rather than establish Government-owned Agricultural Banks."

Next is recommendation No. 39 which is as follows:—

"In the awards of Debt Settlement Boards priority should be given to arrear rents." If this is given effect to, it will benefit both the parties.

Then recommendation No. 40 runs thus:—

"The development of marketing on the lines of the policy adopted by the Madras Government is recommended."

Then No. 41 runs as follows:—

"The possibility of training inspecting officers of various departments in several branches of work and entrusting to them the work of various departments in smaller areas should be examined.

Then No. 42 is as follows:—

"Whether or not a scheme of State acquisition is put into operation, it is recommended that the jurisdiction over rent suits should vest in Revenue Officers with legal training instead of the Civil Courts."

Next is recommendation No. 43 which is as follows:—

"Sale of holdings is the least harsh method of realising arrears of rent and is preferred to sale of movables, ejectment, or distraint."

Then recommendation No. 45 runs as follows:—

"The period of limitation of 3 years in Schedule III of the Tenancy Act should be reduced to one year except where the annual rent is less than Re. 1. In such cases the period should be two years."

Then recommendation No. 46 runs as follows:—

"Limitation for the filing of execution cases should also be reduced to one year....."

Next recommendation No. 47 is as follows:—

"In the view of some members, judgment-debtors who remain in adverse possession after being given a reasonable time to vacate, or who have no reasonable excuse for remaining in possession of decretal property should be liable to prosecution under section 188 of the Penal Code....."

Then comes recommendation No. 48 which is as follows:—

"Rents outstanding for two or three years at the time when this procedure was put into operation should be realised over a period of years....."

Next item is No. 49 which runs thus—

"The payment of rent by money order should continue to be optional; but if landlords refuse to accept money orders, the penalty prescribed in section 64A of the Tenancy Act should be made more stringent....."

Then recommendation No. 50 is as follows:—

"Appeals from the order of Revenue Officers should go to a Court not below the rank of a Subordinate Judge."

The next recommendation is No. 53 which runs thus—

"The revenue laws should be codified."

Sir, if these recommendations are considered, it will appear that they can be easily given effect to as far as possible, and I think there is no insurmountable obstacle in the way of Government to give effect to these recommendations.

I ask by my amendment that these recommendations be given effect to within the next financial year. From the nature of the recommendations that I have cited the honourable members will see that there is nothing very difficult, no obstacle, for Government at least to make a beginning in this direction. These recommendations were made a long time ago and Government also appointed a Special Officer of their own to report on these recommendations. The Special Officer also suggested some action and it was also discussed by both Houses, I mean the report of the Commission, but nothing has been done up to now on this matter. Very recently the Hon'ble the Chief Minister in his individual capacity has formulated a scheme but that is merely a suggestion and it has yet to be considered by the Legislature. Sir, the Commission was appointed with great paraphernalia and fanfare and its President was imported from the other part of the world, namely, the United States of America, and a huge sum of money was spent on the labours of this Commission, but, Sir, what is the result of their Report? About three years have passed and much valuable water has flowed down the Hooghly but nothing has yet emerged from their recommendations. The condition of the people has been becoming very acute and distress is prevailing all round the country, and the position of the poor agriculturist remains still the same. Nothing has been done to improve their lot. I am not speaking of the larger question of the abolition of the zamindary system; it is not only a large question but it is also a question involving a large amount of money, therefore, nothing has been done about that also. But at the present moment I am speaking of a very simple thing. Some of the suggestions of the Commission that I have mentioned if given effect to will do much benefit to the poor agriculturists of Bengal. With these words I appeal to the House to accept my amendment.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Amendment moved: that in resolution No. 2 by Mr. Latafat Hossain, for the words "to the decisions" occurring in line 3, the words "in particular to the recommendations numbered 17 to 30, 34 to 50 and 53 of the main conclusions and recommendations as contained in pages 176 to 182 of the Report of the Land Revenue Commission, Bengal, Volume I", be substituted.

Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR: On a point of information, Sir, with regard to this amendment. When it will be put to the vote, will its different parts be put singly, or will the whole be taken as one amendment and put as a whole?

Mr. PRESIDENT: It may be put as one amendment.

Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR: May I suggest that as the amendment relates to different recommendations of the Floud Commission, the different parts may be put separately? Because, it may be that with some parts of the amendment we may be in agreement, whereas the reverse may be the case with the other parts. So I suggest that you may be pleased to consider the advisability of putting the amendment in parts.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Very well, I am prepared to consider this suggestion.

Late sitting of the House.

(It being 3-40 p.m.)

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, I have to tender my deepest apologies to the House for an unfortunate misunderstanding which has led to this sitting of the House till a late hour this afternoon. This House generally sits at 1-30 p.m. and breaks up at 3-30 p.m., that is to say, after 2 hours. Today this House sat at 2-15 p.m. and normally, in the normal course, it ought to go on till 4-15 p.m. But, due to an unfortunate misunderstanding as to the sitting of this House on Fridays, the other House (I know, Sir, I cannot make any reference to the other House), has fixed 3-45 p.m. as its sitting time today, and it being now 3-40 p.m. their time for sitting is approaching. Therefore I would request the Chair and especially my honourable friend the Leader of the Opposition to agree to the adjournment of the House at this moment. I am very sorry for this misunderstanding and can assure the House that this will not recur again in the future. This very important resolution can be considered on the next non-official members' day.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: We hope we shall be given an additional day for this purpose and also that the House will not be prorogued before we can finish this resolution. It is on that understanding only that we can agree to an adjournment at this moment. We have come in due time and we would like to go on till the end of our time—that is for full two hours. But if the Hon'ble Minister definitely gives an understanding that another day will be fixed during this session for the conclusion of this resolution and also of other resolutions then of course we have no objection.

If the Hon'ble Minister gives us a definite understanding that another day will be fixed in this session for the discussion of this and other resolutions then of course I have no objection to the adjourning of the House now.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: The question of prorogation is not a question for myself. It is a question to be decided by the Governor. But so far as the balance of the time is concerned, namely, 35 minutes, that 35 minutes will be given on another day for the discussion of non-official resolution.

Khan Bahadur ABDUL HAMID CHOWDHURY: May I enquire who is or who are responsible for this mistake? This is not the first time that such mistake has occurred. This is the third time that the same mistake has recurred.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I agree that the mistake is unfortunate, and I hope Government will not commit the same mistake over again, especially today is a non-official day and the House is always very zealous about the rights and privileges of the members to discuss the non-official business for the full length of time. I specially request the Hon'ble Ministers to see that such mistakes do not occur again. I think in view of the assurance given by the Hon'ble Minister is it the desire of the members to adjourn the House now?

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Sir, I want to clear another point. The Hon'ble Minister has said that he would give another 35 minutes. But the Leader of the House promised another day for non-official Bills. So there will be two days, one day for Bills and another day for Resolutions. We have no objection if that is agreed to.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I repeat my apologies with regard to the second point of the Deputy President that there has been a misunderstanding about the sitting of the other House, and I shall certainly see that henceforth such mistakes do not occur. It is only fair that the rights and privileges of the House should be maintained.

With regard to the point raised by the Leader of the Opposition, I was not present when the Leader of the House gave assurance that another day would be allotted for the discussion of food problem and for Non-official Bills; but I shall certainly carry this message to him. As to the balance 35 minutes left today, I assure the Leader of the Opposition that this time will be made good on another day for the discussion of Non-official Resolutions.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Will that satisfy the Opposition?

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Yes, that will do.

Mr. PRESIDENT: In view of the assurance given by the Hon'ble Minister I take it that there is no objection to adjourning the House now. The House stands adjourned till 1-30 p.m. on Monday next.

Adjournment.

The Council then adjourned till 1-30 p.m. on Monday, the 8th March, 1943.

Members absent.

The following members were absent from the meeting held on the 5th March, 1943:—

(1) Khan Bahadur Naziruddin Ahmad.
(2) Rai Bahadur Keshab Chandra Banerjee.
(3) Mr. Humayun Reza Chowdhury.
(4) Khan Bahadur Rezzaqul Haider Chowdhury.
(5) Mr. Narendra Chandra Datta.
(6) Mr. Kamini Kumar Dutta.
(7) Mr. R. W. N. Ferguson.
(8) Mr. Kanai Lal Goswami.
(9) Mr. Mohamed Hossain.
(10) Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan.
(11) Mr. J. McFarlane.
(12) Mr. Naresh Nath Mookerjee.
(13) Dr. Radha Kumud Mookerji.
(14) Mr. T. B. Nimmo.
(15) Mr. Ranajit Pal Choudhuri.
(16) Khan Bahadur Mukhlesur Rahman.
(17) Mr. Birendra Kishore Roy Chowdhury.
(18) Rai Sahib Jatindra Mohan Sen.
(19) Dr. Kasiruddin Talukdar.

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BENGAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DEBATES

First Session, 1943—No. 13.

THE COUNCIL met in the Legislative Chamber of the Legislative Building, Calcutta, on Monday, the 8th March, 1943, at 1-30 p.m., being the thirteenth day of the First Session of 1943, pursuant to section 62 (2)(a) of the Government of India Act, 1935.

Mr. President (the Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY, K.C.I.E.) was in the Chair.

Questions.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The Hon'ble the Chief Minister and the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. Abdul Karim will not be able to be present in the House today. Unfortunately, all the questions have to be answered by these two Hon'ble Ministers, so the questions must stand over today.

Messages received from the Assembly.

SECRETARY: Sir, I have received the following messages signed by the Hon'ble Speaker of the Bengal Legislative Assembly:—

(1) The Bengal Legislative Assembly at its meeting held on March 2, 1943, agreed to the Calcutta and Suburban Police (Amendment) Bill, 1941, as passed by the Bengal Legislative Council, without any amendment.

(2) The Bengal Legislative Assembly at its meeting held on March 3, 1943, agreed to the amendment made by the Bengal Legislative Council in the Bengal (Rural) Primary Education (Amendment) Bill, 1942.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I have received two notices for adjournment, one from Mr. Krishna Chandra Roy Chowdhury and another from Mr. Latafat Hossain. But I am afraid the subject matter of these two motions are the same as that of the special motion of which notice has already been given.

Mr. KRISHNA CHANDRA ROY CHOWDHURY: Sir, I beg to withdraw my motion for adjournment.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I am afraid the motion of Mr. Latafat Hossain cannot be moved, because the motion infringes rule 99 (4) inasmuch as we have already before the House some special motions on the same subject. So the adjournment motion is disallowed.

Mr. LATAFAT HOSSAIN: Why disallowed?

Mr. PRESIDENT: Because it infringes rule 99 (4). The honourable member may discuss the same subject in connection with special motion before the House. You can speak on the same subject.

Notice of amendment for the consideration and passing of the Bengal Non-Agricultural Tenancy (Temporary Provisions) Extending Bill, 1943.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, the amendment which I wish to introduce is a very brief one, viz., in section 2 in

sub-section (3) of section 1 of the Bengal Non-Agricultural Tenancy (Temporary Provisions) Act, 1940, for the words "three years" the words "four years" shall be substituted. Sir, I could not anticipate the amendment notice which has been given by my friend, Mr. Nur Ahmad. He wishes to cut down the life of the proposed amendment from one year to six months, that is to say, for the words "three years" the words "three and half years" shall be substituted. Sir, I make an appeal to the honourable member not to press for his amendment. The temporary life of this Act comes to an end on the 29th May, 1943. I have carefully gone through the draft Bill which was framed under the auspices of my honourable predecessor in office, and I can assure you, Sir, that the consideration and the passing of that Bill take at least forty sittings. Therefore, Sir, the life of the Bill, if the amendment of my honourable friend is accepted, goes up to the 1st December, 1943, and so I hope the honourable member will not press for his amendment.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Motion moved: that the Bengal Non-Agricultural Tenancy (Temporary Provisions) Extending Bill, 1943, be taken into consideration.

Mr. KRISHNA CHANDRA ROY CHOWDHURY: On a point of information, Sir.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Sir, I shall speak on the motion.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Yes, but let me first hear the point of information raised by Mr. Krishna Chandra Roy Chowdhury.

Mr. KRISHNA CHANDRA ROY CHOWDHURY: Sir, if this amendment is carried and the Bill is extended for so many months, what will be the effect regarding the tenancy suits that are lying in the courts?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: The suits lying in courts will naturally be stayed during the period of the life of the extended Bill.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Yes, Khan Bahadur, you can now proceed.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Mr. President, Sir, I rise to support this motion for consideration before the House.

Sir, in rising to support the motion for the consideration of the Bill, I shall make certain observations and I shall have to tell a melancholy tale and some bitter truths regarding this unfortunate legislation for the protection of non-agricultural tenants of Bengal. Sir, soon after the Reformed Council met it was the general demand from all quarters that some sort of legislation should be enacted for giving protection to the non-agricultural tenants of Bengal who used to depend merely on contracts and there were a very large number of tenants who had no contract at all and as such they could be ousted at any moment at the sweet will of the landlord. Sir, the Governments of all countries make provision for the protection of the helpless. Agriculturists are going to be protected even in this country but next

to agriculture I think profession and trade require to be protected, as they are also of great importance to the country. So, for the purpose of giving protection to people who follow the trades and professions it was considered necessary that some sort of legislation should be enacted in order that they may not be turned out at the sweet will of the landlords that is to say that they should have some sort of right on the strength of which they could make improvements on their holdings and live without fear of eviction some four years ago, perhaps it was in 1938, I believe, the Chandina Committee was appointed in order to enquire into the rights of the non-agricultural tenants and to report as to what protection these tenants required. This Committee sat for three long years I believe and submitted a report as far back as 1940. This Committee not only submitted a report but along with their report they submitted a draft Bill setting forth in detail what protection according to them was necessary to be given to these classes of tenants. But, Sir, soon after that there was a change of Ministry and the old Ministry could not take up the matter. The Ministry was only two or three months in office when the term of the emergent Act impending all legal proceedings against Chandina tenants was going to expire, and so they came up before the House with a proposal for extending the emergency Act. This emergency Act was enacted because it was found that just after the appointment of the Non-agricultural Tenants Committee there was a move on the part of zemindars in general and in the Dacca town itself as many as 300 suits were filed against these tenants for eviction until enactment of comprehensive legislation. Government took note of this and they had to rush through this legislation to stop all legal proceedings in civil courts for eviction. That Act was also about to expire after few months of this Ministry coming to office and the Ministry came up to the House and extended the period of that emergency Act. We readily acceded to it but some of us thought that the period should not be more than six months and not one year but we could not prevent it from being passed for one year. But since then nothing has yet been done and it is a scandal that in a matter of such gravity the Ministry should be sleeping and should be taking no action. It is I think a disgrace that they should be again coming up to this House and asking for another extension for one year not having done anything during last twelve months for putting up a Bill in the regular form before the House.

What is the cause of this shilly-shally policy. I am afraid even this year or even within the extended period, which has been asked for, it will not be possible for the present Ministry to get through this Bill, because of their inability and shilly-shally policy, due to the fact that the supporters of Government are composed of such a diametrically opposite ideals that they cannot come to any decision and cannot come to any settlement. There are zemindar supporters who are against this Bill. There were also zemindar supporters in the previous Ministry but they were moving with the times. They knew that they must move with the time if they have to exist at all. But the present Ministry is otherwise. They are not going to pass any measure which is likely to be of any benefit to the poor masses, if it affects even to a very slight degree their own interest. I pity the

present Government because their position is such that if they support this Bill they will lose sympathy of a very large section of land-owners and if they do not support this Bill they will lose sympathy of the democratic section of their supporters: so they are on the horns of a dilemma and they do not know what to do: otherwise it is such a simple measure that no time is required in taking decision. They know that they cannot keep legal proceedings and suits suspended for ever and so they have to take a decision but yet they are not doing anythnig: they know they have to give protection to the tenants yet why they are not doing anything? All that is required is that they should sit together for a few days and come to a decision and place the whole thing before the House. That is what is required and the rest will be done by the House itself. But they are not in a position to do that—they cannot do that. Although some of them may wish to do so, others do not want that this should be done. I am almost certain therefore that even within the extended period if the Ministry continues to be in office they will not probably be able to get through this Bill. I know that during wartime it is very difficult to have Cabinet decision or Government order on a contentious Bill: but it is not a contentious Bill. It has already been decided that some sort of relief should be given to the tenants and because of that all the proceedings have been stayed. The suits and proceedings cannot be stayed for an indefinite period. The Government should take courage in both hands and come to a decision without delay. But it is very unfortunate that the present Ministry which calls itself progressive is following a shilly-shally policy and has not been able to do anythnig within a space of 15 months to show that they have got any feeling or anxiety for bettering the condition of the people at large, agriculturists, traders and the other poor people of the province. If progress means stagnation, if progress means indifference, then of course the present Government is a progressive Government: otherwise it is a misnomer for the party to call itself progressive: if progressive means not do any action but to sit tight then it is a progressive Government. Inaction and indecision is the watchword of the present Government.

Although I have criticized the Ministry, I have full sympathy with regard to this particular motion, because this motion at least seeks to take time for giving protection to these helpless class of tenants and so I support the motion. I hope the Hon'ble Minister in charge of this Bill will see that the comprehensive legislation gets through within the time he asks for extension of the life of the emergent Act and I also hope that he will not again come up for a further extension of time.

Mr. KADER BAKSH: Mr. President, Sir, I think it my duty to speak a few words in connection with this consideration motion which is before the House. Sir, I fail to understand why repeatedly the Government are coming before the House for the prolongation of the period of this measure and also why they have been holding back the Bill. If the Cabinet are decisively of the opinion that this Bill would do some benefit and do some progress in the forward march of the people living in town areas why should they bring in a motion only for the extension of the life of this Bill. Why

should they not bring in the Bill as a whole? Now, Sir, it is known to everybody that town areas are the soul of the districts of the province and why the people living in those town areas should not be allowed to get the benefit of the Bill as thoroughly as possible. It is inconceivable that this Bill should be held back in this manner. The activities of the whole district centres round the town and unless people residing in these towns know what rights they are going to enjoy they would not be encouraged to live in the town areas. So this Bill is absolutely necessary. There is no reason why this Bill should not be brought by the Government before the House. It is thoroughly unjustifiable, unreasonable and inconsistent not to bring in the Bill before the Legislature. Government are only asking for the extension of the life of this particular period. I submit that this is absolutely undesirable and this Bill should be introduced in the Legislature. I know, Sir, that Government would be able to pass this motion but I would appeal to them to bring the Bill as a whole for the consideration of the House as early as possible.

Mr. KRISHNA CHANDRA ROY CHOWDHURY: Mr. President, Sir, the urgency of this legislation has been appreciated by members of the Government Benches as well as the members of the Opposition. The question now is how to expedite the legislation. It is true they have taken very very long time to bring in the Bill. But this time I think Government would be able to bring in the Bill within the time now extended. So, we must want and see in the expectation that this time Government would not sleep over the Bill which is terribly overdue.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Mr. President, Sir, I am very glad that there is no opposition with reference to the proposal which I have brought forward before the House. Views have been expressed by my honourable the Leader of the Opposition that the present Ministry is not seroius about the Bengal Non-Agricultural Tenancy Bill. In the course of his review he has stated that the Chandina Committee which had been appointed by my predecessor in office in 1938, had not submitted its report. But, Sir, the report was to have been submitted in due course and the Bengal Non-Agricultural Tenancy (Temporary Provisions) Bill was brought forward before the Legislature so far back as January, 1940, and in the Statement of Objects and Reasons my predecessor in 19th January, 1940, stated as follows:—

"Government appointed a Committee to enquire into the rights of tenants in urban areas and it is still sitting. Until it makes recommendations, it is not possible for Government to decide their line of action with regard to legislation, if any, but it has been brought to the notice of Government that steps are being taken by certain landlords to evict such tenants from their holdings with the object of preventing them from obtaining the benefit of any legislation which Government may decide to introduce. The Bill has been brought as a temporary measure in order to preserve the *status quo* for the time being."

Sir, the draft Bill was published on the 27th of January, 1940. I had the misfortune and the good fortune to accept office on the 17th December, 1941. If my honourable friend will apply his great mathematical knowledge, then I am as much guilty as the Government to whom he himself is wedded even now. Sir, there was one extension during the time of the previous Government. I was called upon to consider the question in the February Session of 1942 and naturally therefore I came to the conclusion with which the whole House agreed that this measure could not be brought forward in the short time at our disposal then. This Government was not shilly-shallying nor was it dilly-dallying with important pieces of legislation. If my honourable friend will be good enough to travel down the stream of time and arrive at an anchorage at certain important events in the history of the world, he will realise that this Ministry is not sitting idle at all, nor is this Ministry sleeping over matters of importance in this province. Sir, it may be within your recollection that Japan declared war against Britain and against India on the 8th December, 1941, and it may also be within your recollection, Sir, that at the time when we asked for extension of this Bill, Rangoon was falling. The date of the fall of Rangoon was 2nd March, 1942. Since then, Sir, the Ministry in the Department of Revenue had to deal with very important matters which did not brook any delay. First was the question of the payment of compensation about evacuation, the second was the question of the payment of compensation in regard to the execution of orders characterised as the denial policy. Then this department had to deal with the question of the commandeering of buildings and the billetting of soldiers in private houses. Then it had to pass through an unprecedented movement which began on the 8th August, 1942, and it had to face the miseries and privation brought on by the freaks of nature in Midnapore and the 24-Parganas. Sir, under these circumstances our time was fully absorbed. I gave an assurance to the House that I would bring forward a comprehensive legislation on the subject in course of the year and I am asking for respite in course of the year. In the meantime the Bengal Non-Agricultural Tenancy (Temporary Provisions) Extending Bill has been vivisected and dissected in the highest tribunal of the province, and it may be within the recollection of our lawyer friends that there has been divergence of opinion and we had to reconcile those divergent opinions with our views. These things, Sir, do not show any idlying tendency or any desire whatsoever of shilly-shallying or dilly-dallying on our part in dealing with a very important piece of land legislation in this province. Sir, I again appeal to the honourable Leader of the Opposition and also my honourable friend Mr. Nur Ahmed for allowing free passage of the measure which I bring forward before the House.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The question before the House is: that the Bengal Non-Agricultural Tenancy (Temporary Provisions) Extending Bill, 1943, be taken into consideration.

(The question was put and agreed to.)

Mr. PRESIDENT: The question is: that clause 1 stand part of the Bill.

(The question was put and agreed to.)

Mr. NUR AHMED: I beg to move that in line 3 of clause 2 of the Bill, for the words "four years" the words "three and half years" be substituted.

Sir, only a few minutes before we have been served with a sermon by the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Bill. We have been told that the Hon'ble Minister is very earnest in bringing in a comprehensive Bill on the subject. He has made an unfortunate statement which in an amendment like this I need not refute but I must say something as to the necessity and importance of my amendment. Sir, why is it that I want to shorten the period which the Minister wants by six months? The Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Bill emphatically refutes the charge that the Ministry is not dilly-dallying or shilly-shallying with this very important question, and that all along they have been alive to the importance of this question, but that circumstances have intervened which stood in the way of their implementing the assurances they gave in this House. Why is it that I want to shorten the period of this extending Bill by six months? My leader has stated the history of this legislation and I do not want to go into that history again, but it appears that the original Act was passed in the year 1940 and it became law in May, 1940. The period for which this Temporary Provisions Bill was passed was two years and in the preamble it was clearly laid down that pending the passing of a comprehensive legislation it was necessary to stay all the suits and proceedings filed in the civil courts by means of this Bill. The effect of the passing of this Temporary Bill was that a large number of suits by Chandina landlords filed against their tenants for eviction were stayed and Government have received a large number of applications from the tenants to give them some sort of protection against eviction. Government appointed a Committee and that Committee submitted a report which was published in May, 1941. At that time it was also given out as one of the reasons why no action was taken by Government on these applications was that the Comimttee would enquire into this very important matter and that as soon as the Committee reported a Bill would be prepared and passed. The Committee submitted its report in May, 1941. The old Ministry fell in November, 1941. So after the passing of the Bill in 1940 the old Ministry had practically got one year and six months in which to bring in a Bill; the Bill was published in the *Calcutta Gazette* but nothing was done after that. This present Ministry took office in December, 1941, so that already one year and three months they have had to prepare a new Bill or to improve the Committee's Bill, and I am sure that within this time the Ministry ought to have prepared a comprehensive legislation to replace this Temporary Provisions Emergency Bill.

Sir, I am not oblivious of the fact that this Ministry is called the Progressive Coalition Ministry. It wants progress in all the departments—in all the fields of activity. In view of that I want to give them three months' time more so that it will show progress in respect of time also, because this Bill should be passed as early as possible and the matter must be expedited and there is good reason for that. From the original Act it appears that all suits and proceedings have been stayed under section 6 of the Act. That section shows that all suits and proceedings which were pending in courts should be stayed so long as this Act would remain in force. From

1940 to 1943 suits are being stayed from month to month and year to year and it is now more than three years. Another point, Sir, is that the definition given in the temporary Bill is very incomplete that definition is given in section 2 of the Act. The words are—that only those Chandina tenants who hold land for residential, manufacturing or business and industrial purposes under "Terms of agreement"—the words used are "Terms of agreement": this is very vague. From the report of the Chandina Committee we find that the Committee recommended that there are certain classes of tenants called the Chandina tenants who hold land and there is no written document: but they have been in possession of the land for a long and continuous period and the recommendation of the Commtitee is that these tenants should be given transferable permanent right. But in the Act which is going to be extended nothing has been said with regard to that. That leaves out a large number of tenants and unless a comprehensive Act is passed such tenants will suffer to a great extent. There is another matter. Section 5 of the Act says that after the passing of the present legislation means that the landlord—the decreeholder—will be entitled to realise rent at the previous decretal rate. It is now more than three years and many things are taking place: in many places rents have been reduced and neither the tenants nor the landlords are getting any benefit. They are bound to accept the old rate of rent and tenants are bound to give the rents at old rates. So this is an anomalous state of things and it is desirable that that anomaly should ended. I am astounded to hear from the Hon'ble Minister in charge that this simple Bill will take 40 sittings. We have passed many legislations and more complicated legislations than this Bill: they did not take as many as 40 sittings. I think if my amendment of "six months" is accepted the result will be the same. If the Government is earnest, as they say they are, then they should immediately work out a draft Bill and refer the same to Select Committee so that the Bill may be passed in the July session and it may be brought to the other House in November. So, purposely with that end in view I have put "3½ years," so that the time may come up to the 1st December, 1943, and by which time Government may pass the Bill as a whole. If the Government are really earnest they can bring in the Bill; but if they do not rise equal to the occasion, they would again come up for extension of time and the result would be that they would not bring the Bill in the next July session. If they are not earnest they would probably not bring it in November of the next Budget session. I have moved this amendment only to test the earnestness of the Hon'ble Minister or for the matter of that of Government and I hope the Hon'ble Minister will accept the amendment. It will make no difference between one year and six months.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Amendment moved: that in line 3 of clause 2 of the Bill, for the words "four years" the words "three and half years" be substituted.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, I would request my honourable friend Mr. Nur Ahmed once again to withdraw the amendment. The position with regard to the amendment will be this: if the life

of this Bill is extended for six months then the life of the Bill comes to an end on or about the 1st December, 1943. Even if there is a July session of the Upper House, the Bill will take a long time to be passed in both the Houses and in the meantime if the Bill lapses after the 1st of December then all kinds of difficulties and complications will arise. I am therefore suggesting that he would be good enough to withdraw his amendment.

Mr. NUR AHMED: Sir, in view of the assurance of the Hon'ble Minister I beg leave of the House to withdraw my amendment.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Is it the pleasure of the House to permit Mr. Nur Ahmed to withdraw his amendment?

(The amendment was then by leave of the House withdrawn.)

Mr. PRESIDENT: The question before the House is: that clause 2 stand part of the Bill.

(The motion was put and agreed to.)

Mr. PRESIDENT: The question before the House is: that the title and preamble be added to the Bill.

(The motion was put and agreed to.)

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, I beg to move that the Bengal Non-Agricultural Tenancy (Temporary Provisions) Extending Bill, 1943, as settled in Council, be passed.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Motion moved: that the Bengal Non-Agricultural Tenancy (Temporary Provisions) Extending Bill, 1943, as settled in Council, be passed.

Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR: Mr. President, Sir, at the third reading of the Bill, I would like to convey through you to the Hon'ble Minister concerned a few requests with regard to this Bill. We support this Bill and we hope along with members of the Opposition as well as members of this side of the House that the permanent Bill may be put on the Statute Book by next year. In this connection I would only draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister to the condition of tenants in the Calcutta area. This Bill which we are considering today relates to non-agricultural tenants outside the region of Calcutta, but there are a very large number of poor tenants of Calcutta who have also been affected very seriously in view of the war emergency which has arisen in the *bustee* areas. I would request the Hon'ble Minister to take into consideration the plight of these *bustee* dwellers of Calcutta while considering such legislative measure as may be necessary in order to alleviate their distress.

With these few words I accord my wholehearted support to the Bill.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Mr. President, Sir, I fully realise the difficulties of the Tenancy Bill in Calcutta. There is one pending before the other House with reference to this question, but this question, as my honourable friend will realise, is in a state of chaos due to abnormal condition which Calcutta itself is passing. For instance, when

there was exodus the sub-tenants left and the tenants had to pay rents to the landlords, and when there has been an influx, there has been further complication. On this ground legislative action was not undertaken but executive action therefore may be taken in order to solve this problem. It is a difficult problem, I agree.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The question before the House is: that the Bengal Non-Agricultural Tenancy (Temporary Provisions) Extending Bill, 1943, as settled in this House, be passed.

(The question was put and agreed to.)

Special motions on food.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, order. There are four special motions, one is by Mr. Nur Ahmed which is in a way of comprehensive one. No. 2 is by Khan Bahadur Saiyed Muazzamuddin Hosain which includes other items with food. Then there is No. 3 which is practically the same as the second one. Then No. 4 is by Mr. Nur Ahmed which is entirely a separate motion, namely, for "Grow More Food". But the day has been fixed for consideration of the food problem. So it is rather doubtful whether "Grow More Food" exactly comes within the purview of the motion which the House is discusing today. If Government have no objection, with the consent of the House I would like to allow it to be taken it up along with food problem.

The supplementary special motion is practically identical with No. 2. So I would suggest taking up supplementary special motion which is the most comprehensive of all.

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Government will have no objection to the motion being discussed, rather it is Government's desire that matters relating to supply of essential articles of food are discussed in this House.

Mr. PRESIDENT: In view of what has been stated by the Hon'ble Minister, the supplementary special motion of Mr. Nur Ahmed should be taken up.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: I propose No. 1 to be taken up first.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I understand that it was not possible to circulate copies of this special motion of Mr. Nur Ahmed to the honourable members, so I am afraid we have to rule it out.

No. 2 is practically as comprehensive as the supplementary special motion of Mr. Nur Ahmed. So I would suggest that No. 2 be taken up.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Sir, before I move my motion I may say that it is the desire of some members on this side of the House and also on the other side that it would be better if the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Food makes a statement in the first instance, and then we proceed to discuss the contents of that statement. For it is quite probable that Government have taken action of some kind or other

of which we are unaware and our remarks on such matter may be useless. That is why I request that the Hon'ble Minister may make a statement at first which we can discuss. Otherwise, of course, we shall have to proceed in our own way.

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: These are special motions and it is not the practice of the Minister in charge to make a statement in the first instance. Let the motion or motions be moved and they will be open to discussion, and then I shall reply to the debate in due course.

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: On a point of information, Sir. May I take it that the Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur has gone through all these three or four motions before the House? As they are special motions under section 96 of the Bengal Legislative Council Procedure Rules, the consent of the Minister in charge has got to be given and therefore it is essential for me to know whether the Hon'ble Minister has gone through them. It is necessary that copies of these motions should be in his hands so that he may go through them and then decide if he can give consent to any or all of them.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Mr. Das, the Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur is present here and also says that he is prepared to reply on behalf of Government; this shows that he has given his consent. Is it therefore necessary to ask if he has given his consent to these motions?

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: But all the same it may be that he has not gone through these motions and has not given his consent, as he ought to under the rules.

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Sir, Government have given an assurance that the question of food should be discussed in this House and debate, but I did not know that I should have to give my consent to the moving of these motions.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The Hon'ble Minister ought to know that on receipt of notices of motions or amendments under section 96 this department sends them down to Government departments for consent of the Hon'ble Ministers, so the Hon'ble Minister is expected to be familiar with these motions.

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: At least of the fourth motion, Sir, I was not aware.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Well, that one is an exceptional case.

Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR: For the purpose of convenience may I also reiterate the view expressed by the Hon'ble the Leader of the Opposition that Government should first make a statement——

Mr. PRESIDENT: Professor Kabir, let us first of all dispose of the question raised by Mr. Lalit Chandra Das, namely, as to whether the Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur has given his consent to all the motions before the House.

Mr. MESBAHUDDIN AHMED: Is that really necessary, Sir? The Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur is prepared to agree to the moving of these motions; so it may be easily taken that he has seen them and has given his consent also.

Dr. KUMUD SANKAR RAY: Sir, when you have called upon a member to move his motion, is any further consent of the Minister required?

Mr. PRESIDENT: Under rule 96 of the Procedure Rules the consent of the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the department is certainly necessary and when the Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur first spoke, I inferred that he had given his consent. But what he says now has raised a doubt as to that and I would therefore formally ask him whether he is prepared to give his consent to the motions now.

Dr. KUMUD SANKAR RAY: I am afraid that it would not be quite regular, because you, Sir, as President of this Chamber, have called upon a particular member to move a particular motion and it is not open to an Hon'ble Minister to say that he has not given his consent——

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: No, no, the Hon'ble Minister has not specifically said so; he has not said that he objects to the moving of any of the motions.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Under the rules the Hon'ble Minister in charge of a department has the privilege of giving or refusing his consent to the moving of a special motion. And without ascertaining in the first instance whether the Minister in charge is prepared to agree to such a motion being discussed, I cannot call upon any particular member to move a motion. Now as he has given his consent, that question does not arise.

Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR: May I ask, Sir, whether amendments will be allowed to be moved to the motions. These special motions were received by us this morning and we did not have time to give notices of amendments. Besides, it is a regrettable fact that some of the motions have been framed in the form of censure on the Government. I am sure that there has been a good deal of agreement on the general discussion of this subject and this House will make certain suggestions for action to the Government; but unfortunately this particular motion of my honourable friend opposite has been worded in such a way as to mean a censure on the Government.

Mr. PRESIDENT: It is for the honourable members to frame the motions in the form they like. If you want to make amendments you will choose your time later on.

Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR: Then can I move amendment?

Mr. PRESIDENT: Yes, provided copies of amendments are available to the members in time.

Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR: Sir, I received the motions only on Sunday——

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: There was two days' time for giving notices of amendments. The motions were received day before yesterday.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I am told that the copies of motions were circulated on Saturday last.

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: May I know, Sir, in respect of which motion Mr. Kabir is referring? My motion at least is not worded in a way which is a reflection or censure on the Government and at the same time has been worded in a way to bring to the notice of the Government that a serious situation has been created and the question of giving consent so far as my motion is concerned does not arise.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I would draw the attention of the honourable members of the House to page 2 of the agenda where it is stated "subject to the consent of the Hon'ble Ministers concerned, who have been already addressed on the subject." The Hon'ble Minister in charge of Agriculture and Industries has just given his consent to all the four motions on the agenda.

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Sir, I am not Minister in charge of Agriculture at present.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, the special motion is governed by rule 96 of the Bengal Legislative Council Procedure Rules. If you look at page 24, rule 96 says, "Save in so far as is otherwise provided by the Act or by these rules, no discussion of a matter of general public interest shall take place otherwise than on a resolution moved in accordance with these rules, except with the consent of the President and of the Minister to whose department the motion relates". My honourable friend the Nawab Bahadur has given consent to the motions arising out of his department. In order to validate them, it is necessary that the consent of the other Minister concerned in these motions should be taken: there are series of resolutions and they are not only concerned with my friend the Nawab Bahadur but to a great extent concerned with the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Hashem Ali Khan: therefore his consent will have to be taken with regard to the portions appertaining to his department.

Mr. PRESIDENT: With reference to what has been said just now by the Hon'ble Mr. Banerjee, I may inform him that the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Agriculture has already given his consent, so that objection does not arise. As regards Nawab Bahadur, I take it that he has given his consent to all the resolutions so far as they relate to his department.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: I beg to move that this Council is of opinion that the measures so far taken by the Government for ensuring supply and control of prices of food, cloth and other necessaries of life, have been wholly inadequate and ineffective and urges Government to draw up immediately and implement a comprehensive scheme for supply and control of prices of food and other necessaries of life

both in urban and rural areas, if necessary, in consultation with the leaders of all parties and other prominent members of both the Houses of Legislature who take interest in such matters.

Sir, first I have to review the steps so far taken by Government. In October last year, when we last met, we were told that so far as the produce of food was concerned, Bengal was self-sufficient and that Bengal was not short of food. But in spite of that declaration the price of rice was steadily going up. Then we were told that the rise in price of rice was due to hoarding and profiteering. But, Sir, was it not the duty of Government to stop this profiteering and this hoarding? As a matter of fact, we know that nothing was done, no step was taken to stop this profiteering and this hoarding, if that was really the cause of abnormal rise in prices. I say Government could be reasonably charged with abetting, profiteering and hoarding when we find that they did not exercise their power at all to adequately deal with the profiteers and hoarders. On the other hand, they have allowed the profiteers to go on unchecked. They did not care to fix the control price of absolute necessaries of life, such as, rice, salt and other articles. They did not at all care to introduce a wholesale control of price of rice which was an absolutely essential article. What was the reason for Government allowing this abnormal rise in price of rice? We knew and everybody knew that the agriculturists who grew paddy had not to spend more money than was necessary for growing the paddy last year. This year of course the price has risen a good deal more due to high cost of living. But why Government did not take care to put down the price with a strong hand? What was there in the way of Government fixing maximum price and punishing those who wanted to sell rice at higher price than that fixed by Government? By not taking any action Government indirectly helped the richer people who deal in rice at the cost of the poorer classes. They have helped the richer agriculturists and stockists. Probably the Government's reply would be that they did not like to interfere with the rise in price of rice because it helped the agriculturists, but, Sir, I may quote certain figures for the information of the House from which it will appear how the agriculturists are being helped by this rise in price of rice. I refer to Table 8(B) of Volume 2 of the Land Revenue Commission Report. It will be found that in Bengal as many as 46 per cent. of families held less than 2 acres, 11 per cent. between 2 and 3 acres, 9·5 per cent. 3 to 4 acres, 8 per cent. 4 to 5 acres, 7 per cent. 5 to 10 acres and 10 per cent. above 10 acres. Five acres is ordinarily taken as economic holding for a family. So, from that point of view it would be found that 75 per cent. of the agriculturists of Bengal hold uneconomic area and it is not sufficient for them to have their own annual food. Only 25 per cent. have got economic holding of whom only 8·4 per cent. have got surplus areas and remaining 17 per cent. or half of that can probably sell some of their paddy. Therefore, in all 15 to 16 per cent. are really getting the benefit of the rise in the price of rice and the remaining 85 per cent. of the agriculturists who have to purchase a portion of paddy for their own subsistence, are already affected by the rise. So, how does it lie in the mouth of Government to say that their non-interference in the matter of rise in price of rice helps

the agriculturists of Bengal? They have done a great mischief and they have caused a great disaster to the agricultural population, 85 per cent. of whom have got to purchase and cannot afford to sell their rice. Then there is the agricultural labour population who according to the last census forms 29 per cent. of the total agricultural population. These people have got to purchase entirely all their rice from the open market. So what will be their position if they have got to purchase rice at a cost of 200 to 300 per cent. above the normal price? Does Government realise what has been the position of the people in the rural areas? They are only thinking of people of Calcutta and industrial areas. I know Calcutta and industrial areas have to be looked after. But, have they not got responsibility for the people of the rural areas also who constitute 95 per cent. of the total population of Bengal? The people residing in Calcutta and other cities form only 5 per cent. Do the Government think that they can safely ignore 95 per cent. of the population who are passing their days in such a terrible condition? Sir, these people are actually starving for days and nights together and our Ministers do not care to know what is their condition. Only the other day I put a question to the Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur of Dacca who is the Minister in charge of Commerce and Industries and Labour, as to what are the wages of agricultural labour. In reply he said that he did not keep any information. This is the state of affairs with our Ministers. They do not care to keep any information as to how agricultural labours who comprise as much as 29 per cent. of the total agricultural population of Bengal are passing their days.

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Has anybody kept any information since 1937?

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: What I want to say is this. Our Ministers who are said to be popular Ministers should keep all sorts of information regarding everybody under their charge. The Hon'ble Minister should not say that as he is in charge of Commerce and Industries Department, and of industrial labour only he has nothing to do with agricultural labour population even though they form 29 per cent. of the total agricultural population. Then, Sir, we were told only the other day by the Hon'ble Chief Minister in the course of his budget reply that there has been real shortage of food in Bengal this year, and in reply to one question the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Agriculture was pleased to say that the ordinary normal requirement of rice in Bengal was 9,266,800 tons but the estimated produce this year is only 6,938,800 tons. Hence, the shortage is as high as 25 per cent. We asked a supplementary question to the Hon'ble Agriculture Minister as to how he proposed to meet the deficit. In reply he said that he did not know as the question belonged to the province of the Minister in charge of Food. Sir, so it appears that there is no co-ordination between the Food Minister and the Agriculture Minister. Sir, we are told that the Ministers are working in joint responsibility. So there must be some sort of co-ordination between them, otherwise how can they take joint responsibility? Sir, the Ministers should not be going on

only with their own departments sitting tight in their airtight compartments without having correspondence with each other and without showing any interest for the poorer classes who are passing their days in starvation and who are dying like flies. Sir, the Ministers may feel comfortable because they do not get any information about deaths from starvation. But, Sir, deaths from starvation can never occur unless one is determined to commit suicide by means of starvation.

On account of constant starvation the poorer people lose the power of resisting the disease and they fall prey to all sorts of diseases and subsequently die. The other day there was a conference at Kishoreganj and we were told how whole villages had been depopulated or depopulated to the extent of 50 per cent., as in the Terai thana of that subdivision. Malaria is playing havoc there but malaria would not have been at all able to play any havoc if these people had got nourishment or nutritive food to resist the disease. If something is not done immediately, Sir, in the interests of the poorer masses and of the agriculturists, then the disaster of 1775 would be re-enacted in Bengal and in the next census we would be told that altogether one-third of the population of Bengal has been wiped out by malaria. We find that we are face to face with a dangerous deficit of as much as 23 per cent. of rice. All our imports have been cut short. In other years when there was no war we used to get our supplies of rice from Burma but now there is no hope of getting any supply from there. What does the Government therefore propose to do? Is the Government thinking out any scheme for rationing foodstuffs in the rural areas? Rationing merely in the town of Calcutta and in industrial areas will not help at all; this will not meet the demand caused by the deficit. They must think out and prepare a scheme for the entire Bengal, because the deficit of 23 per cent. cannot in any way be met by merely providing for cities. They must therefore introduce the rationing system throughout Bengal. We are told that the task is vast; I admit that. But, Sir, it will not do to sit idle; they will have to grapple with the problem in right earnest and find out a solution for it. We know in what unbusinesslike way the Ministry has been proceeding. From October we have been told that some partial control has been introduced in some cities and towns, but, Sir, what has been the result and object of this partial control? The object has been to give relief to the poorer classes who have been hard hit by the abnormal rise in prices, but this object has not been at all achieved by this partial control. It ought to have been easily understood that the poor people who had to earn their living from 7 or 8 o'clock in the morning till 5 or 6 o'clock in the evening, could not possibly go to these control shops and wait there for hours together in queues for getting their supply of rice. They could not possibly do so. Sir, "unbusinesslike" is writ large on the face of the whole scheme of Government. There was no register. The shop-keepers who were given the supplies did not know if the same person was not coming to his shop twice or thrice or the same house was sending in different persons to purchase the supplies. The way in which the Government has been handling this problem is simply ridiculous. They are only playing with the problem and this has made the situation worse. The poorer people are

worst affected because they thought that they would be relieved but they did not get the relief; for it has been often found that even after waiting for three or four hours these poor people had to go away disappointed because the supply was exhausted. Whereas, in the meantime the supply was being sold through the backdoor in the black market. And this is perhaps the procedure which is being followed even now. Unless there be complete control or unless there be partial control with regular registers and the ration cards, the people whom Government want to help cannot receive any help and unless those persons alone are given articles at the controlled rate, Government cannot expect to give any relief to the poorer classes by establishing only a few shops for selling articles at controlled prices.

I want a definite reply from Government on this point. I directly charge the Government with abetting, profiteering and hoarding. Why did not Government take it into their head to fix a maximum price for rice which is our chief food and force the shop-keepers to sell at that price? It has been seen that nobody has been consulted in the matter: had they done so no criticism would have occurred, and the poor people would not have suffered. But the Government is following a policy of drift. A Supply Officer has been appointed in every district and subdivision; but these officers have not been supplied with any definite instructions as to how they should proceed. They are naturally proceeding in an unbusinesslike manner. In my village—in the village of Astagram—there was a regular bungling of the whole matter: regarding rationing of kerosene oil the presidents and members of the union boards were being entrusted with work of distributing kerosene oil. Twice in the month they used to supply in my village: three thousand or more people used to assemble there for kerosene oil and there was a regular struggle for taking kerosene oil. But after waiting for the whole day even half the people assembled did not get the supply and even this half did not get the full amount to which they were entitled. There was no businesslike method of distributing the oil. I had to send for the union board president and members and told them that they would not succeed in properly distributing the oil in this unbusinesslike manner. I asked them to ask the *mahalla* chowkidars to get slips from each householder who wants kerosene oil and to ascertain the number of members in each family and the amount of choukidari tax each family pays. These were brought together and calculation made as to the total amount required for the village. The amount of kerosene oil required for a particular *mahalla* was attached to particular shop. Each family will get its requirement without any difficulty and without having to wait for the whole day and there will be no struggle. In my village this procedure is being followed and there is no trouble now. I do not know how Government appointed these Special Officers with no instructions as to how they are to proceed in the matter of distribution and they do not know at all how to proceed. It is the duty of the Government to see that everything is conducted in a proper and businesslike manner.

Then, Sir, we are told that rationing in the mofussil areas is impossible —the Government reply to our questions is something like this. But I

think it is not at all impossible. We have got a network of Government officers throughout Bengal: throughout the village areas we have got union boards, we have got *mahalla* choukidars: above them we have got Circle Officers and in addition to that we have got jute staff and the public health staff. If they are utilised for the purpose of making a census of the stock in the mofussil, we can get a fairly accurate figure of the stock and the requirements of each household. We will get it within a fortnight if we care to adopt such a course. We have got full staff. We will not be required to appoint additional staff for collecting these statistics. Sir, I throw out the challenge that if I am placed in charge of a thana I am willing to work without any remuneration for a month and show that the whole thing could be managed very easily if Government only give me necessary powers and necessary help. This could be done very easily, I repeat, and the entire statistics could be collected and necessary provision could be made for proper rationing of rice and paddy. In mofussil and particularly in my own village rice is selling at Rs. 13-14 per maund, I have received report from my village today, whereas the labour population which comprise 29 per cent. of the population are not getting more wages, they are starving, but Government are still sitting idle. They do not care what happens to the mofussil people. This policy of drifting on the part of Government must be abandoned and they should launch a regular and organized scheme of distribution and see that it is given effect to at once. If they have no idea, if they have no imagination, if they have no constructive scheme, let them lay down their reins of office and not merely play with the problem which they have no capacity to solve. Let them issue ration cards to the poorer classes in the mofussil areas not only for rice but also for other necessaries of life.

Sir, there is one more point which I have forgotten to mention earlier and that is about the statement of Government that there is deficit of rice in Bengal. With reference to this question, the Minister in charge of Agriculture has said that paddy has grown less this year. But have they done anything to get rice from Orissa, Assam or Bihar? Today, I was told by some merchants that rice was selling at Rs. 10-10 in Bihar and that lakhs and lakhs maunds of rice were lying there but for want of permit they were unable to bring them down here. Why are Government not paying any attention to this matter? Why are they are caring to look into the matter—The Premier of Assam Sir Saadullah spoke somewhere in Delhi that in his province there was surplus rice. We have got deficit here. Is it not the duty of Government to arrange to bring down Assam rice to Bengal? No arrangement has been made in regard to that. The ordinary method by which rice used to come from Sylhet and Dhubri to Mymensingh, has been stopped. One hundred and fifty boats that were carrying rice from Dhubri to Mymensingh had been seized and the rice confiscated and the owners punished.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, order, does the honourable member propose to take more time to finish his speech? He has already spoken for nearly 20 minutes.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: I shall take only 5 or 6 minutes more.

As I was saying, Sir, 150 boats were carrying rice from Dhubri. The boats were stopped and the boatmen were arrested and were fined. Similarly, export from Sylhet from where generally rice used to be exported to the eastern part of Mymensingh district which is a deficit district, has been stopped and Government are taking no notice of it. It is a wonder of wonders why the Government is indifferent. It is a mystery to us and a mystery to all thinking men.

The Government has shown absolute incapacity to deal with the food problem of the province. They have shown they have neither ideas, nor imagination nor any determination to deal with the problem. They have no feelings for the mass in rural areas, who are starving and dying slow death. They have miserably failed to tackle the situation. If, the Ministers are incapable to immediately devising ways and means for saving the lives of people placed under their charge, they should in all fairness, lay down their reins of office.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Motion moved: that this Council is of opinion that the measures so far taken by the Government for ensuring supply and control of prices of food, cloth and other necessaries of life, have been wholly inadequate and ineffective and urges Government to draw up immediately and implement a comprehensive scheme for supply and control of prices of food and other necessaries of life both in urban and rural areas, if necessary, in consultation with the leaders of all parties and other prominent members of both the Houses of Legislature who take interest in such matters.

Begum HAMIDA MOMIN: Sir, I rise to speak on this motion not in anger but, Sir, in great sorrow. I am sure, if you had seen the hardships that the people are undergoing in the suburbs of Calcutta where I live, your heart would bleed. Every afternoon when coming to the Council I see a big queue of men, women and children waiting for their supply of rice when they should be working for a wage. It is not known how long before the real time of distribution they have gathered there and how long they have still to wait there for rice and even then after waiting for a long time many of them have to go away without getting their share of rice. This mode of supply of rice is not only inadequate but extremely defective. The civic guards and others who are placed there to see that the people are promptly and adequately served—they are the first persons to take away large shares for their own consumption and for their own friends and it is an open secret and it is heard everywhere that any one can buy any quantity of rice at a higher price by the backdoor: this is indeed deplorable. I do not know what is the controlled price of rice today. When coming here I enquired of a grocer's shop about the price of rice and I was told that it was eight annas per seer. A sample of this rice is with me here and if any of the honourable members desire to see that they are welcome to come and see. As it is so difficult to buy rice at controlled shops people go to these

grocers and buy at a higher rate. The fact is that the number of shops and markets selected by the Government for the sale of rice at controlled prices are insufficient and cannot even supply the actual daily consumption of the locality, even to the extent of 10 per cent. And this is the reason why hungry people are driven to other shops and the black market is created. Neither is the quantity of rice which is given to each individual sufficient for two meals for an average family which consists of, say, 5 persons. To my knowledge in the Tollygunge area the Southern Market has a shop where rice is sold at controlled price and this is three miles away from the other end. Another little shop near the Tollygunge bazar used to distribute rice at controlled rate but here on many occasions people were sent away on the ground that there was no stock of rice and probably this has been stopped now as I do not see the queue either in the morning or in the afternoon when passing in that direction. Sir, this is the position with regard to the supply of rice. If rice is sold at 20 rupees per maund and *dal* at ten annas a seer, then, Sir, what is a man to do whose income is between Rs. 30 and Rs. 50 a month? These are the class of *bhadrologs* whose hard lot is well known and their sufferings under these circumstances cannot be described. Then comes the wage-earner who cannot earn more than Rs. 20 to Rs. 25 a month. If all his income goes in buying one maund of rice, it is difficulty for him to keep his body and soul together. Whenever the question of supply of food has come before the House the Minister in charge has answered in a loud voice that a Civil Supply Directorate has been created and it is busy framing a scheme and holding conferences with the leaders and other members and so on and so forth, but nothing tangible for the benefit of the people has come out of these assurances. And yet though this department has been in existence for nearly a year the price of rice is going up by leaps and bounds and has now reached the maximum of Rs. 20 a month. It is Rs. 21-8 today—a price which probably we have never heard of even at times of famines. If this is the position of rice at this time of the year when there are yet 9 months before we can expect the new crop to be brought home, what will be our position later on? The ordinary people do not understand politics, Sir, they want food and look up to Government for the supply and when Government fails to relieve their distress naturally Government is to be blamed. Sir, it is an irony of fate that the Hon'ble the Chief Minister at the time of his election shouted at the top of his voice to his countrymen that the one problem of Bengal was the problem of *dal-bhat* and that he would devote all his efforts in seeing that this was not denied to them. And, Sir, how has this promise of his been fulfilled? From the time that he assumed the reins of Government there has been a steady decline in the supply of food and now we find ourselves faced with a distress never experienced before. There is no indication even now that the Government are even anxious to relieve this distress. It can hardly be expected that the Minister in charge of Food Supply, brought up in plenty and luxury, can feel and realise the acute sufferings of the people and the Premier and his colleagues are too much preoccupied in maintaining their office to think seriously or plan wisely for the relief of the distress of the people.

We know that large supplies of food grains are required for the use of the army. This is certainly necessary for the efficient prosecution of the war, but at the same time the needs of the civil population are not negligible items in the programme of the war. Sir, it is probably not known to many how food grains are wasted even by Government agencies and how unnecessarily lavish the supply is to the army and the allied services. Sir, my bearer's son is in the employ of a military office and he gets his ration at most liberal scale and at very moderate price. He says they have ample stores in their godowns and supplied fine rice to their employees at Rs. 6 a maund. I have personal knowledge of how valuable foodstuffs are being wasted in evacuee camps. In my own district of Burdwan large stocks of *chura*, *chhatu* and *gur* were stored in evacuee camps and even fresh vegetables such as *patal* were purchased and stored only to be thrown away after a few days and replaced by fresh supplies. To my knowledge the same thing happened in Tollygunge where thousands of maunds of rice were purchased by the Collectors and ultimately destroyed. There are hundreds of evacuee camps in Bengal and there is no doubt that thousands and thousands of maunds of food grains have been wasted which could have been utilised for feeding the civil population.

Sir, I have only mentioned the facts which have come to my knowledge and I do not propose to go into the larger question of shortage of food, the reasons of such shortage and so forth. What we want is food and that the Government should find it for us. Government has failed to do so and deserves our censure.

It is not for me to make detailed suggestions for solving the difficulties; but I have one suggestion to make which would bring the rice at controlled price nearer to every householder and be easily available to them. I would like to suggest that Government divided Calcutta and the suburbs into small areas and make a list of the existing grocers' shops in each area: they should take statistics of the quantity of rice generally sold by each of these shops daily and then allow each shop a proportionate quantity of rice for sale at controlled price. This will make rice of easy avail to the people and black market will lose its custom.

Mr. LATAFAT HOSSAIN: (Spoke a few words in Urdu which may be filled in, and then went on in English as follows.)

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: What is the meaning of the quotation?

Mr. LATAFAT HOSSAIN: I will let you know later. Sir, it is well known that the supply of rice or paddy from outside of this province has ceased since the declaration of war with Japan. Supply of rice from Burma has ceased since the fall of the country. Demand of rice in India has increased since the influx of evacuees from Burma, Rangoon and Singapore quite in large numbers and for the maintenance of the large army of this country. Produce of paddy and rice in this country is a failure this year due to (1) many fields being acquired by the Government for military purposes and (2) natural calamity as in the Midnapore district. This province is deficit in respect of (1) coal, (2) sugar, (3) *dal* and (4) wheat, and these things are to be brought from outside of this province.

Now, let it be considered as to what has been done by the Government as yet for the amelioration of the grievances of the people of this province.

First, when it was found that the scheming businessmen and speculators were making much profit from the public then the Controller of Prices for Bengal was appointed with several assistants, for Calcutta and several Inspectors for the industrial areas near about. This Controller used to publish fortnightly rates at which things are to be sold in the markets of Calcutta. The Subdivisional Officers of the different subdivisions used to fix up the rates of the essential commodities for their respective areas under the power vested in them under the Defence of India Rules. It is a matter of common knowledge that the rates fixed by the Controller were not adhered to by the businessmen of Calcutta as a result of which the businessmen of the subdivisions could not stick to their rates as they had to purchase things from Calcutta at higher rates. Considering the fact that the controlled rates at Calcutta were only figures on papers without any effective check, most probably the said department began to publish the actual rates at Calcutta at which the things were being sold.

Then a Directorate of Civil Supplies in the province was created with one Director of Civil Supplies at the head. Under the Director there were several District Supply Officers and under the District Supply Officers were the Subdivisional Supply Officers.

Government imposed certain bans on the movement of rice from one district to another, and permits were to be obtained from the Magistrate of the importing district and on that permit being shown to the Magistrate of the exporting district, only rice could be moved from one district to another and the Directorate of Civil Supplies used to authorise the Magistrates for the purpose.

Then for purposes best known to the Government, another officer was appointed as the Purchaser of Foodgrains, Bengal. This officer took upon himself all the powers so long exercised by the District Magistrates and he is the only person now to issue permits for bringing rice from surplus areas to the deficit ones.

This Foodgrains Purchasing Officer is purchasing rice through his men at the different centres. Although it is best known to the officers concerned that areas like Calcutta and its neighbouring industrial areas are very much deficit of rice and where there are lakhs and lakhs of people still there is no initiative on the part of the Government to supply rice to these areas from the surplus areas.

By a notification published in the *Calcutta Gazette* on 22nd January, 1943, it has been stated that from certain districts, such as, Hooghly, Howrah, Nadia, Murshidabad, Dacca, etc., rice exceeding 300 maunds in weight could not be carried by any person to another district without the permit of the District Magistrate of the exporting district. That is to say, there is no objection if rice less than the above amount is taken out of the above districts. But by a notification issued by the Railways it is forbidden to book any consignment from one district to another.

Practically speaking the situation has come to such a point that there is no import of rice to the industrial areas from outside to give effect to the different circulars of the Government. If any businessman approaches for a permit then he will be required to state the price at which he will sell the rice here when imported, and if he failed to give such an undertaking beforehand considering the fact that it will take some time to have the permit and the fact that the price of the rice may go up by that time, and as such it is very difficult to quote the price from before in these days, then he will not be eligible to have a permit.

The price of rice is not controlled at any place. Immediate supply of rice requisite to the demand of the localities should be ensured by Government. Local wholesellers should be selected to whom the rice should be sent for each area. And these wholesellers should be entrusted with the distribution of the stock to the retailers who in their turn will sell to the customers, as is being done for the purpose of distribution of sugar in this locality. Sectional Committees should be formed with respectable businessmen, non-official professional men and labour leaders who may have voice over the public or who can represent their cases and their suggestions for the local supplies should be carefully considered.

Permit should be issued to the businessmen through easier processes and the simple businessmen should not be harassed for nothing by officers for getting permits. The machinery of getting permits should be easier. Some businessmen should be approved by Government who may be given permanent permits for their areas for bringing rice from outside.

At present the Mill Welfare Shops are supplying foodstuffs for the individual workers only. But the fact that these workers have got other members of their family besides themselves should not be ignored.

Proper provision of foodstuffs for all the members of the family should be made by the management of mills. Similarly, provision of foodstuffs for other civil population should be made by Government.

Local co-operative stores should be organised and encouraged by Government and financed by employers, and these should be the medium of supply to the public in general. Government should issue necessary permits to the mills and give proper facilities so that the mills can supply full quota to the workers.

The Wheat Commissioner of India should be moved so that *atta* and wheat may be supplied to this province regularly. In the name of *atta* people are now taking powder of *bajra*, barley, etc. This could be tolerated so long as there was winter but to think of their fate in the summer will be appalling. There are cases where the local Magistrates have issued permits to businessmen for bringing wheat from the Punjab but the Director of Civil Supplies has not accommodated them. The businessmen should get more facilities to bring things from outside.

I have already dealt in my speech of the 25th February about the serious situation that is ahead of us for the proper distribution and supply of foodstuffs to the public as at present. It is the bounden duty of Government to supply foodstuffs to the public according to their requirements. If

Government fail to discharge this duty properly, then there is sure to be food riot and trouble and unrest amongst the public, as they have got every right to live and have their usual meals.

To minimise the trouble of the public Government should supply foodstuffs to the deficit areas so that this permit-system-trouble of obtaining wagons by private businessmen be not there.

If the Directorate of Civil Supplies hopelessly failed to supply foodstuffs to the public what is the good of creating new and so heavy departments? By proper supplies the price of commodities should be brought down so that people may purchase them within their means. If the administration does not give proper protection to the people, people are likely to lose faith in them. Sir, it is with great regret that I inform the House that in reply to a supplementary question of mine on the 5th February, 1943, regarding the present rates of price of the foodstuffs in Bengal the Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur of Dacca very frankly said that he had no information about it. What a matter of surprise and regret it is that he being the Minister in charge of the Labour and Commerce Department and being a responsible member of the Government is so ignorant about the situation and happenings of the province? Sir, we never expected such a disappointing reply from such a responsible man like the Nawab Bahadur. It is nothing but "neglectedness" on the part of the Government that lakhs of people of Bengal and specially of industrial areas are now on the verge of starvation.

Sir, if he does not mind, once more I will ask the Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur for God's sake it is not the time to follow the manner and principle of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah. Otherwise the poor section of Bengal shall be victim of his neglectedness. Please do not think that if you are well-to-do, all your people are also the same. There are many whose earning is from hand to mouth and in these days of economic degradation their hardships cannot be counted. Nothing is lost if you come forward even now and save the poor people of Bengal from starvation.

Mr. J. MCFARLANE: Mr. President, Sir, I rise to support the motion before the House. It is not my intention to traverse in detail the grounds already covered by the previous speakers, nor do I wish to recount the sins of omission and commission of the Government in regard to a matter so vital as that of food-supply. There is I think nothing to be gained by that at the present juncture. Sufficient to say that the position has been and still is extremely grave and whatever steps Government have taken to deal with the position have proved singularly ineffective. At the same time we have to bear in mind that this problem of adequate supply of foodstuffs at reasonable prices is not peculiar to this country. It is common practically to all the countries in these days and I doubt if any one of them has found a really satisfactory solution to it. Furthermore, we realise that so far as foodstuffs normally produced outside this province are concerned, this Government can do little without the approval and co-operation of the

Central Government. But when it comes to rice which is the staple foodstuff of the bulk of the people of this province it is an entirely different matter, for rice is a commodity in respect of which the province has hitherto shown itself as more or less self-sufficient. Actually for 1941-42 there was a considerable surplus of rice and consequently it is surprising to hear that although the requirements of the province in the current year are estimated at about 9¼ million tons, the estimated production is put at about 7 million tons.

Is this to be regarded as a reflection on the activities of the Ministry of Agriculture—and does it point to a lack of drive behind the "Grow More Food" campaign? The belief is generally held, and it is admitted by Government, that large stocks of foodstuffs do exist in the province, but they unfortunately in the main appear to be under the control of profiteers and hoarders and it is in dealing with these gentry that Government has shown such lamentable weakness. There is surely only one method of dealing with them and that is to confiscate their stocks, fine them and imprison them—all three, and let us have no more nominal fines and nominal terms of imprisonment. It will do no harm to treat them "rough". The view of this party and it is also most decidedly the view which prevails in the United Kingdom and in Russia, is that no treatment is too severe for such enemies of society. I hope Government will adopt it as their own views and broadcast their intention of dealing mercilessly with these people—these pests. They would find plenty of support if they did so. Let them publish prominently in the Press the names and addresses of those found guilty of this crime and the punishment awarded to them. Then perhaps the public will be content to follow the advice given in an advertisement published yesterday by the National War Front to "leave the big hoarders to Government".

Much criticism has been heard in regard to the personnel of the Directorate of Supplies and we ask Government to consider whether it is fair, whether it is reasonable, to expect that officials however good their records and however willing they are to apply themselves to their new tasks—they should suddenly become possessed of an intimate knowledge of the business of purchasing and supplying foodstuffs. After all there are a few Admirable Crichtons to be found even in the I.C.S. Is Government satisfied that men with the essential qualifications of knowledge and experience of this business are not to be found outside the ranks of the Civil Service?

In concluding my remarks I would ask for Government's assurance that they regard dearness allowances as only a temporary and unsatisfactory expedient for meeting high prices and that they recognise the dangers inherent in granting such allowances, one of which being the danger of playing into the hands of the profiteer. With these words, Sir, I support the motion.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Before I adjourn the House I would like to inform the House that the Governor has agreed to give an additional day for

non-official business. 10th March is the day for the general election, there will be no business and the House will not meet on that day. On the 11th and 12th there will be non-official business.

The House stands adjourned till 1-30 p.m. tomorrow.

Adjournment.

The Council then adjourned till 1-30 p.m. on Tuesday, the 9th March, 1943.

Members absent.

The following members were absent from the meeting held on the 8th March, 1943:—

(1) Khan Bahadur Naziruddin Ahmad.
(2) Rai Bahadur Keshab Chandra Banerjee.
(3) Mr. Humayun Raza Chowdhury.
(4) Khan Bahadur Rezzaqul Haider Chowdhury.
(5) Mr. Narendra Chandra Datta.
(6) Mr. Kamini Kumar Dutta.
(7) Mr. Mohamed Hossain.
(8) The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. Abdul Karim.
(9) Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan.
(10) Mr. Naresh Nath Mookerjee.
(11) Dr. Radha Kumud Mookerjee.
(12) Khan Sahib Abul Quasem.
(13) Khan Bahadur Ataur Rahman.
(14) Mr. Birendra Kishore Roy Chowdhury.
(15) Rai Sahib Jatindra Mohan Sen.

BGP-4314-1415A-750

BENGAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DEBATES

First Session, 1943—No. 14.

THE COUNCIL met in the Legislative Chamber of the Legislative Building, Calcutta, on Tuesday, the 9th March, 1943, at 1-30 p.m., being the fourteenth day of the First Session of 1943, pursuant to section 62 (*2*) (*a*) of the Government of India Act, 1935.

Mr. Deputy President (Khan Bahadur ABDUL HAMID CHOWDHURY) was in the Chair.

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Sir, before you take up the questions today, may I request you to postpone the questions, because there is an important discussion regarding the food problem. I understand that many honourable members desire to take part in the debate. So, if the questions are left over we may have a full day for the discussion.

Mr. NARESH NATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, may I put to you that usually the first hour of sitting of the House is devoted to questions and answers every day. Moreover you will see, Sir, that my question was given notice of as early as November last year and I am going to get the answer only today. Of course, if it is the general desire of the House to postpone questions, I have no objection, but I would like to have some supplementary questions out of this question answered by the Hon'ble Minister concerned.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Is it the desire of the House that questions should stand over so that more time could be devoted on the discussion of the food problem?

Mr. NARESH NATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, may I also draw your attention to rule 24 of the Bengal Legislative Council Procedure Rules, from which it will appear that it is almost mandatory that the House should devote the first sitting hour to the asking of questions, etc. Rule 24 says, "First hour of every meeting shall be available for the asking and answering of questions." So, I do not see how it is within the purview of the House to depart from this usual practice.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: If the honourable member insists, the questions will be taken up first.

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Then, Sir, let us take up the questions first.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Supply of rice.

56. Mr. NARESH NATH MOOKERJEE: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department be pleased to state if the Government anticipate any shortage in supply of rice in the near future? If so, what steps do they propose to take?

(*e*) What are their commitments with other Provinces and/or countries with regard to the export of rice from this Province? Are they at fixed charge or dependent entirely on the available surplus?

MINISTER in charge of the COMMERCE and LABOUR DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) The position has considerably changed since the honourable member put in his question last November. The present state of agricultural statistics in this Province does not permit of any very precise statement on this subject, but the worst that Government anticipate will be temporary local shortages in some of the urban areas later in the year. Their scheme of purchase of paddy and rice provides for this contingency. Besides, the possibilities of an improved system of distribution in urban areas are at present also under their investigation.

(*e*) Government have not entered into any commitments with regard to the next year's crop.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister kindly state what is the scheme of purchase of paddy and rice and what amount has been allotted for this purpose?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: I cannot give the figures offhand. I want notice.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: If the Hon'ble Minister cannot give answers to supplementary questions that are put to him, then what is the need of putting such questions? This is a very serious question, and we want to know what provision has been made and whether it is sufficient to meet the contingency.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: There is no room for argument on the part of the honourable member. When the Hon'ble Minister wants notice, then the rule provides that it should be given him.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Has the Hon'ble Minister done anything to make any sort of agreement with other agents for bringing more rice for meeting the shortage of rice in this province?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: We have done everything that has been possible for us to do. I shall make a statement before the House showing the exact position we are in.

Mr. NARESH NATH MOOKERJEE: My question arises out of answer (*e*). I should like to know whether there are any commitments which Government have entered into with regard to this year's crop. Government have said that they have not entered into any commitments with regard to the next year's crop. I presume this relates to *aus* crop.

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Since August there have been no commitments. There were several commitments before I came into office. Now there is no further export of rice from Bengal, as there is no commitment at all.

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: Has there been export of rice from Bengal?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: I have already said that since August last there has been no export of rice from Bengal.

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: Is it a fact that there was an export of rice from the Calcutta port without the knowledge of the Government of Bengal?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: I am not aware of it. I want notice.

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is not a fact that before August large quantities of rice were exported from Bengal to meet the needs of Ceylon?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: There were certain exports of rice but the quantity, I don't think, was very large.

Mr. NARESH NATH MOOKERJEE: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that large quantities of rice have been shipped to foreign ports through permits obtained through the Ministry of Shipping, and that in spite of the Government of Bengal making every effort to control and refuse such permits, shipments have been made without any reference to the Government?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Will the honourable member please repeat the question, Sir? I did not hear it properly.

Mr. NARESH NATH MOOKERJEE: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that very large quantities of rice have been shipped to ports outside India by means of permits obtained through the Government of India, in spite of attempts of the Government of Bengal to control such shipments?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Sir, a short-notice question has been put on this subject, and I am making enquiries and shall reply to this question when I get the materials.

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether the scheme of the Directorate of Civil Supplies is to the effect that it is purchasing paddy and rice within the province?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Yes, within the province and outside the province also, if it is possible to do so. We shall be quite ready to purchase rice if available in other provinces.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Arising out of the answer to the question of Mr. Naresh Nath Mookerjee, does it not appear that Mr. Mookerjee knows better about the commitments of Government in regard to rice since August, 1942, than the Hon'ble Minister himself?

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Well, that is not a supplementary question.

Mr. SHRISH CHANDRA CHAKRAVERTY: With regard to answer (*e*), what is the nature of the commitments made by Government and to whom were such commitments made?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Well, Sir, the answer in (*e*) is that no commitments have at all been made or entered into with regard to the next year's crop. The answer is quite definite.

Mr. NUR AHMED: With regard to (*a*), is it a fact that about six lakh tons of rice and paddy have been exported from Bengal during 1942 to foreign countries or elsewhere?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: So far as my knowledge goes, I have not heard of this, and it has not been brought to my notice; but as I have stated a short-notice question has been already asked on the subject. I shall make an enquiry if any rice has left this province through the machinery of the Government of India.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: May I ask if the statement in answer (*e*) is correct, namely, that "releases have been made from time to time to relieve local scarcity in different districts; and also to honour Government's commitments elsewhere"? Is that statement true?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Where is that statement in answer (*e*)? Please show it to me.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Yes, Sir, it is in answer (*e*), and I am reading from it.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, order. Are you questioning the accuracy of the answer given by the Hon'ble Minister?

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Yes, Sir. That is my point.

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: The honourable member may be a legal luminary, but he may please look at the answer more carefully, where it is stated that "Government have not entered into any commitments with regard to the next year's crop," but he will not find any such statement there that he has read out.

Control over rice.

57. Mr. NARESH NATH MOOKERJEE: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department be pleased to state what is the present position with regard to rice in this Province?

(*b*) Is there any system of control at present with regard to price, sale and movement of rice from one district to another?

(*c*) If so, what are the details? If not, what do the Government propose to do to ensure the sales of rice to the public at a fair price?

(*d*) What is the total quantity of rice and paddy purchased by the Government under the "Denial Policy"?

(*e*) Has any portion of this been released to the market or for any other purpose? If so, what were the circumstances that led to such release?

(*f*) Is it a fact that such releases are entirely at the discretion of the Government of India?

(*g*) Do the Government propose to buy further quantities of rice? If so, do they propose to buy it through registered dealers who will finance themselves and sell the rice at a fixed price on permits issued by the Government?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: (*a*) Attention of the honourable member is invited to the reply to his question No. 56.

(*b*) In Calcutta control prices have not been formally abrogated but their enforcement has been intentionally relaxed in the interest of supply: the position in the districts varies with local conditions.

After the inauguration of their scheme of purchase, Government have imposed restrictions on the movement of paddy and rice from their buying areas, and have also authorised District Magistrates of deficit areas to restrict movements outside their areas except for limited local trade across the boundaries of these deficit districts.

(*c*) *Vide* reply to (*b*) above. Sale at fair prices must depend on healthy market conditions reinforced by controlled distribution. For the present market conditions have been eased in certain areas by the movement of stocks and controlled distribution of limited quantities is in force in Calcutta. The question of developing a system of controlled distribution for the whole Province is under Government's active consideration. The enforcement of the Food Grains Control Order is a preliminary stage.

(*d*) It is not in the public interest to disclose it.

(*e*) Yes. Releases have been made from time to time to relieve local scarcity in different districts; and also to honour Government's commitments elsewhere.

(*f*) No.

(*g*) Government have already embarked on a scheme of purchase of paddy and rice from some of the more important rice-growing districts of this Province through selected agents. The rice thus purchased by them will be sold under controlled conditions and at fixed prices. The scheme of distribution is now under the investigation of Government.

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: (After reading from the printed answer.) May I point out to the honourable members of the House that since this answer was framed, there have been many changes with regard to the food condition and it should not have been really the answer today as the position is now quite different.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Let us know the present position.

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: It is very difficult for me to give the exact position in detail now. But I shall be able to do so if I am given time to redraft this answer according to the present position.

Mr. W. B. C. LAIDLAW: Arising out of (*c*), is the Hon'ble Minister aware that there is a jute mill on strike today as a result of the shortage of foodstuffs in the area?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: It was not brought to my notice before. Now, from the honourable member I have come to know about it.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: With reference to answer (*b*)—"For the present market conditions have been eased in certain areas by the movement of stocks, and controlled distribution of limited quantities is in force in Calcutta"—will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if this statement is correct?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: As I have already said, it was correct when the answer was framed; but now the condition has changed.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: When was the answer framed?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Some time ago; but I cannot say exactly when, without consulting the file.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: As the Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur has said that the answer is not up to date, I think it would be convenient both for the Hon'ble Minister and for the members if this question is held over so that proper answer may be given on a later date.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Certain parts of the answer may be held over on the ground of change of condition; but there are certain other portions which relate to facts which now exist and so far as they are concerned the Hon'ble Minister cannot go back upon it.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Sir, the Hon'ble Minister has replied that "releases have been made from time to time to relieve local scarcity in different districts; and also to honour Government's commitments elsewhere." My question is what is the meaning of "Government's commitments elsewhere?" Certainly, the Hon'ble Minister cannot say that he could improve the reply of this question also. This is simply defining a matter which has already been done.

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Sir, may I point out that these things took place before I had taken charge of this department.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Sir, may I submit to you that the Hon'ble Minister when he looked into this question certainly did notice that supplementary questions of this nature would come. So, I again ask

what is the nature of those commitments. He did anticipate such supplementaries, and now the Hon'ble Minister is withholding the answers. What was the extent of the commitments that the Government of Bengal had with the Government of India?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Sir, I have already said what I had go to say.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Sir, the Hon'ble Minister is about to make a statement about this food problem and certainly it presupposes that he is aware of this important fact, namely, how far and to what extent rice stocks had been removed by commitments of the agents of the Government, commitments of merchants and dealers either of the Government of India or of private persons.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Are we to understand that this question will stand over? If it stands over, then you should see, Sir, that it is answered during this session.

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: I have already given an assurance that this question will be answered during this session.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: When the Hon'ble Minister is saying that he would answer the question fully afterwards have you any objection to that?

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: Sir, this important question has been causing the gravest anxiety to all sections of the people of this province and we should get the answer from the Hon'ble Minister now.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Hon'ble Minister promises to give a complete answer within the next three or four days.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: But, Sir, he may not be present in the House during that time.

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Sir, may I point out to you that a reflection has been made on my character by Mr. Hamidul Huq Chowdhury that during the next three or four days I shall not be present in the House. Either he must withdraw his remarks, or he should explain what he means by that.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: On a point of personal explanation, Sir. I do not know whether the Nawab Bahadur would be present during the next three or four days. It is best known to him. What I intended to say is this: He was reported to have been suffering from illness and we do not know whether he has been completely cured so as to enable him to be present throughout the whole session. In case he is again attacked with illness he cannot come to this House for answering the question. So, he may not be present in the House. That is what I meant.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: Sir, may I put one supplementary question and, if you think that it is worth while for the Hon'ble Minister to answer that supplementary question, you may kindly ask the Hon'ble Minister to answer that. My question is this: What does the Hon'ble Minister mean by saying that this answer is not up to date? Whether it was not up to date at the time the answer was written, or whether it was not up to date at the time it had gone to the Press or at the time when it returned from the Press ready for being read out to the House here? What does he precisely mean by this? This is a question, Sir, on which the mind of the entire population of Bengal is seriously excited. So, I beseech you not to shut out the answer. Public minds are extremely anxious to hear the answer.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Who is shutting out the answer?

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: The Nawab Bahadur.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: I want to know from the Hon'ble Minister at what precise time this answer was considered not up to date? Secondly, he says——

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Several questions should not be put at a time.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: Sir, let the Hon'ble Minister answer at what particular time it was found that the answers were not up to date?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: When honourable members put questions to the Ministers, the answers thereof are prepared after getting information, and as soon as they are prepared they are sent to the Press and also sent to the Legislative Council Department to be printed and produced before the honourable members. But I cannot say exactly when it was found that the answers were not up to date. I am very sorry that I have not as sharp a memory as my lawyer friend has.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: When the Hon'ble Minister found that the answers were not in tune with facts? Is it when he read them out today to the House?

Mr. KRISHNA CHANDRA ROY CHOWDHURY: Sir, is this argument in order?

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Surely not.

Director of Industries.

58. Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce, Labour and Industries Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) for how long the present Director of Industries has been holding his office;

(*b*) whether there is any time-limit to all gazetted officers holding post at the same station, and if so, what;

(*c*) whether the time-limit fixed for all gazetted officers does not apply to the Director of Industries, and if not, why not; and

(*d*) for how long more is the present Director of Industries to continue in his present post?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: (*a*) Since February, 1937.

(*b*) and (*c*) So far as this post is concerned no time-limit has been fixed for it. I have no information as regards other gazetted posts.

(*d*) Until December, 1955, in the ordinary course.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Sir, with reference to answers (*b*) and (*c*), are we to understand that no time-limit has been fixed for any particular post?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: I have already said in my answer that I have no information as regards other gazetted posts. My answer is very clear.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: True, you have no information on that point. But is it a fact that all heads of departments and all gazetted officers from the lowest rung of the ladder up to the Viceroy have to go out of their present posts after five years?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Everybody knows that there is a time-limit in respect of each post. Even clerks have certain time-limits in regard to their posts. But I am not supposed to be a walking dictionary to tell my honourable friend everything that he wants to know.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware of the reason why a time-limit is imposed on the services of these gazetted officers and other officers?

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: How does this question arise?

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: This question arises out of the reply that the Hon'ble Minister has given that he knows that even the Viceroy has a time-limit as regards his tenure of office.

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Well, I never said so; you just put it to me and I agreed with it.

Mr. KRISHNA CHANDRA ROY CHOWDHURY: Sir, is this a question or an argument?

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: No, it is not a question properly asked.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: In answer (*d*) the Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur has stated that the Director of Industries will go on till December, 1955, in the ordinary course. So there has been a

deviation from the ordinary rule, namely, that a particular officer can only occupy a particular post for a certain period till death or retirement, but that for certain exceptional reasons there has been a violation of that practice: what is that reason?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: In the ordinary course people retire at the age of 55. When this appointment was made there was no question of any time-limit, but in the ordinary course the officer would reach the age-limit in December, 1955, and would have to retire then.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Is there any contract or agreement with the incumbent of the post that he will be kept in this position till he reached the age-limit or earlier if he happened to die?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: I want notice.

Kerosene and sugar.

59. Mr. LATAFAT HOSSAIN: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department be pleased to state if the Government are aware that kerosene and sugar cannot be had at the controlled rates in most parts of mufassal areas?

(*b*) Are the Government aware that kerosene is not allowed in sufficient quantity to the licensed dealers and in consequence people are forced to purchase from contraband sellers at much higher rates?

(*c*) What steps do the Government propose to take in the mufassal areas for effectively controlling the prices of all the necessaries, particularly of (*i*) rice, (*ii*) kerosene, (*iii*) sugar, and (*iv*) coarse cloth?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: (*a*) Yes, it is true that kerosene and sugar are not available at controlled rates in some parts of the mufassal.

(*b*) Government are not aware of the details of sales by "contraband sellers", but it is true that the quota of kerosene allowed to licensed dealers has been severely restricted, owing to restriction of supplies from source.

(*c*) Steps that Government propose to take are (1) controlling the movement and distribution of supplies from the source as far down as the wholesale dealers specially selected for the purpose, and (2) vigorously enforcing the controlled prices by prosecution and black-listing dealers who sell above controlled rates. Schemes providing for this have recently come into force in respect of kerosene and sugar. It is intended to bring a similar scheme into effect with regard to coarse (standard) cloth.

As regards rice, steps have been taken to establish effective control over the rice markets of this Province through a system of co-ordinated buying by Government agents and by the imposition of rigorous restrictions on the speculative movement of grain, from one part of the Province to another.

Mr. NARESH NATH MOOKERJEE: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether any prosecutions or convictions have been made in connection with the sales of kerosene oil at a price higher than the controlled rates?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: I want notice in order to be able to say exactly how many such cases have been filed, but there is no doubt that certain prosecutions have taken place.

Mr. NARESH NATH MOOKERJEE: Has any case been brought to the notice of the Government where sales of sugar have been made at prices higher than the controlled prices, and are the Government in a position to tell the House whether any person has been convicted for selling sugar at a price higher than the controlled price?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: No case has been brought to the notice of Government, but as in the case of rice certain prosecutions have taken place but as to the number of such cases I cannot say anything offhand.

Mr. KADER BAKSH: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether the controlled price of sugar in Calcutta is six annas and a half per seer and whether sugar is actually selling at nine to ten annas a seer? At any rate I have had to pay ten annas for a seer of sugar.

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: The controlled price of sugar is about seven annas a seer, and it is also selling at that rate in shops where adequate store of sugar is kept. But large quantities of sugar are also being sold at the black markets at a higher price, and Government are trying their best to stop these markets and also to prosecute them for violating the law. But lately we have made better arrangement for facility in selling sugar at the controlled rates.

Mr. KADER BAKSH: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether this system of partial control of sugar in Calcutta has not proved absolutely untenable?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: When there was partial control it was to certain extent ineffective. But I think now full control has been established so far as sugar is concerned.

Dr. KUMUD SANKAR ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether whenever control is sought to be established on any particular article it has resulted in the immediate increase in the price of that particular commodity in the bazar?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: I submit, Sir, this does not come within the purview of this question. This question asks for general information regarding kerosine oil, sugar, salt and other things. It does not mention the whole sugar position.

Malaria in Jessore and other places.

60. Dr. KASIRUDDIN TALUKDAR: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be

pleased to state whether it is a fact that cholera and malaria have broken out in almost epidemic form in Chittagong, Faridpur, Jessore, Mymensingh, Pabna, Bogra and some other districts of Bengal?

(*b*) If so, what special measures, if any, have been taken in each of these districts by the Government?

(*c*) How many persons were attacked with (*i*) cholera and (*ii*) malaria in each of these districts and how many have died up to the 30th November, 1942, in each of these districts?

MINISTER in charge of the PUBLIC HEALTH and LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) A statement is laid in the Library.

(*c*) Three statements furnishing the required information as far as readily available are laid in the Library.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the particular period to which the particular statement belongs?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: My honourable friend will get the information if he refers to the statements. He will find that the statements include the period of October onwards: in some cases September also, and in case of malaria from January, 1942.

Girls' High School in Chittagong.

61. Mr. NUR AHMED: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that all the girls' high schools in Chittagong have been closed since 1942?

(*b*) If so, what arrangements have been made by the Government of Bengal for the secondary education of Chittagong girls during this emergency period?

(*c*) Is it a fact that the teachers of primary schools and of aided junior and senior madrasahs (both old scheme and reform scheme) are in great financial distress owing to abnormal rise in prices of foodstuff and other necessaries of life.

(*d*) If so, what measures have been taken by Government to help them with financial aid?

(*e*) How much money has been sanctioned by Government of Bengal for financial help to the teachers of aided high English schools in Bengal?

MINISTER in charge of the EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. Abdul Karim): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) Government have arranged for the Khastgir Girls' School to function in a hired building at Dacca. Girls from Chittagong are admitted as residential students.

(*c*) These teachers are undergoing the same hardships as other citizens drawing low salaries.

(*d*) A dearness allowance has been approved for all teachers of primary schools managed by District School Boards. No decisions have yet been made concerning possible aid to other teachers.

(*e*) Government agreed to give a subvention of Rs.75 per teacher to teachers of high schools in Calcutta and this was dispersed last October. No assistance to teachers outside Calcutta except the normal grants-in-aid to schools has been provided.

Land for Vagrants' Homes.

62. Rai Bahadur BROJENDRA MOHAN MOITRA (on behalf of Khan Bahadur Ataur Rahman): (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state when the land for the Vagrants' Homes in Mahalandi (Murshidabad) was taken possession of by Government?

(*b*) Is it not a fact that the actual owners of the land are cultivators and that agriculture is their only occupation?

(*c*) Have they not been deprived of the current year's crop?

(*d*) Have Government paid any compensation to the poor cultivators? If not, what is the reason for such delay?

(*e*) Will the Government consider when making award the fact that these men were made idle for one year and they lost one year's crop?

(*f*) When can the *raiyats* expect to get the compensation for the land and for the loss of the crop for one year?

MINISTER in charge of the REVENUE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee): (a) Possession of the land was taken on 1st July, 1942.

(*b*) and (*c*) Yes.

(*d*) No. The delay was due to the fact that detailed enquiries had to be made as to the amount of compensation payable in each case.

(*e*) All relevant factors have been taken into consideration in assessing fair compensation in each case.

(*f*) The *raiyats* will get the compensation within the present financial year.

Discussion on Food.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Now the House will resume discussion on the food problem.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: May I suggest, Sir, in this connection that it is desirable that the Hon'ble Minister in charge should make his own statement at this stage before the House as to what the Government have done up to now and what is their full programme of work

in this connection and the position of Government generally in this respect, and then the House will take up discussion on the statement of the Hon'ble Minister and put forward suggestions so that Government will be in a better position to make a reply?

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: What do you say Nawab Bahadur?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Sir, I accept the suggestion of my friend opposite, and I am grateful to him for this suggestion. I shall make my statement now and there will be discussion on it, and then I will reply to the speeches of the honourable members: that will be better.

Sir, before I make the actual statement I should like to say one thing. When the Leader of the Opposition spoke on his motion yesterday he laid all the blame on the Ministers. Everything that has happened in Bengal with regard to food, the Minister in charge has been made responsible for it; the honourable members think that the Ministers are responsible for the hoarding which is going on. If Assam refuses to give rice to Bengal, that is also the responsibility of the Bengal Ministers. If the Government of India does not help Bengal in the matter of getting rice from other provinces, that is also the responsibility of the Bengal Ministers. Similarly, if Bihar does not export sugar, that is also the responsibility of the Hon'ble Ministers. I shall show in my statement that Bengal has to depend for rice not only on the other provinces in India, but also outside India and therefore there are two-fold difficulties. Embargoes have been put on exports by the different provinces and there is no co-ordinated buying at the Centre. This fact should be borne in mind by the honourable members of this House while criticising the action taken by the Bengal Ministers on this problem.

I admit Government, in the beginning, started a wrong procedure by not controlling the foodstuffs at the sources. That was a mistake, and this mistake was committed before I had taken charge of this department. I may tell the House that we have been successful in the control of all articles except rice. I must say that the rice problem is a very difficult problem, and any suggestion from the honourable members of this House would be very welcome by me in formulating a satisfactory solution, of this all-important problem. I am grateful to the Hon'ble the Leader of the Opposition for his suggestion in connection with the union board supplies in his own village. It would be useless to try to control supplies elsewhere other than at the sources of supplies. We should approach the cultivators and convince them that it is to their own interest that they should hand over their produce to the Government. Because by such action on their part would ensure them a fair price. Unless we do this we shall not be able to supply the people who most need it.

I may tell the honourable members that reorganization was just started when I took over charge of this department. There were only three officers who were dealing with this most important food problem. But it was I who had to take the reorganisation of the whole machinery. It was not possible for me to tackle such an important matter as food supply at a

moment's notice. We had to try and get sufficient staff to deal with this matter. It has been asked by my honourable friends of the Opposition why we have not taken the businessmen into our confidence and utilised their services in the matter of food supply? But, Sir, I can tell them that we had already sought their help in this matter but none of them came forward to help our officers to solve this most important problem. So we have had to deal with this matter with materials which are in our hands, and we have been able to organise a system of food supply only in July or August last. Sir, due to this abnormal situation brought on by the war, no country throughout the whole world, not even England where they have absolute control over commercial establishments, is free from shortage of foodstuffs. Sir, the situation became worse when Japan came into the war and places like Burma and Rangoon began to fall into enemy hands and we had to divert our attention from the food supply problem to other temporary measures which we had to formulate in order to cope with the crisis.

Sir, the provision of foodstuffs at reasonable prices for the people of Bengal has been a problem that has received my closest attention since I took charge of the department. It is no doubt known to the members of this House, but I would like to take the opportunity to emphasise that except in respect of rice—and even for rice the loss of import from Burma, the denial of boats, the demands for military, our normal commitments to Bihar and Assam, hoarding on a fairly extensive scale have tended to create local shortages—this province is deficient in respect of all its other essential food supply, viz., wheat, *dal*, mustard, sugar and salt, and has to depend in varying degrees upon the supplies it can secure from the producing provinces. Thus for wheat we are dependent on the Punjab, for *dal* and mustard largely on Bihar and the United Provinces, for sugar again on Bihar and on salt for supply from overseas and the West Coast of India.

I shall take up later each of these items and coal and kerosine separately and endeavour to show what we have achieved and the problems that still remain to be tackled. Here I would make one or two general observations and describe the position as I found it specially in the matter of organisation when I assumed charge of this department. When I took charge I found that the problem of securing an adequate food supply for the people of this province at a price that was reasonable was being dealt with merely as a matter of price control. Maximum prices for different necessaries of life were fixed and regulations issued without (*i*) any attempt at securing a control at the source from where they were obtained, and (*ii*) without any attempt to secure adequate transport on priority for the movement of the articles, and finally without laying down in detail the manner of their distribution after their arrival in this province.

The problem as I saw it was that it was not so much a problem of price control but rather a problem of transport and, above all, a problem of distribution, and source of supply.

Now, Sir, regarding distribution our difficulty was that not only there was no adequate trades organisation which might be entrusted with the

retail distribution of the foodstuffs secured, but that there was no departmental organisation at headquarters to plan and work out the details of a concerted policy for controlled distribution of foodstuffs. I then set myself first to the task of reorganising this branch of my department. A Civil Supply Directorate outside the Writers' Buildings was set up. A Director at the head with three I. C. S. officers to assist him and a number of subordinate officers were appointed. The organisation continues to grow and makes increasing demands for officers. We have given the requirements of the Directorate a very high priority, and I may give this assurance to the House that I shall spare no pains to make this organisation as complete in its officers' strength as early as possible. Should suitable officers of Government be not available, I shall not hesitate to take in men if they are available from other sources—from the trade and from private business offices.

Sir, I mentioned earlier that one of the handicaps that Government met with in applying their scheme of controlled distribution was the absence of a suitable selling organisation. To meet this lacuna we have recently set up a Distributing Trades Tribunal. This Tribunal is something in the nature of a Public Service Commission. Its purpose is to select the main distributors. We have been fortunate in securing the services of men like Sir Fazlur Rahman, Mr. D. R. Scott and Dr. Satya Charan Law. I feel sure that before long they will be able to evolve a suitable machinery for distribution of the essential foodstuffs.

In any scheme of controlled distribution it is necessary that the price at the source should be known and controlled. In almost all the foodstuffs which we have had to obtain from other provinces this difficulty has been experienced; either the price in the producing province has not been controlled or supplies at the controlled price have not been obtained. I will only give two instances in support of my argument. The Central Government themselves fixed a price for wheat in the Punjab, but our dealers could not obtain it at that price. We have fixed a price for coal here, but the price at the pithead at Jharia and the other coalfields is not fixed and keeps on fluctuating making local control impossible here. Sir, added to this is the difficulty that no province now appears to admit that it has a surplus in respect of any foodstuffs and that we have had often to contend with other provincial embargoes on the export of their foodstuffs. Only recently, in November, the United Provoinces Government have imposed a ban on the export of all varieties of *dal*. The Government of India are now evolving a scheme for the control of foodstuffs on an all-India basis. It is hoped that when this scheme is under way we shall receive the share we are entitled to not only on the basis of our large population, our contribution to war effort in industry, but also upon the ground that this province must receive a preference, being most exposed to enemy attack.

I turn now, Sir, to give an indication of the action taken in respect of the different foodstuffs, kerosene and coal. First let me take rice. I have already mentioned the general causes which have operated to make rice short in supply in particular areas. To ease the rice position we first attempted control of the price of rice in last July. The control proved

ineffective, the trade declared *hartal*, and we raised the price by one rupee in the hope that it will improve the situation. This hope was not fulfilled. We then tried various expedients. We moved stocks of denial rice into Calcutta and opened a number of shops to sell this rice at controlled rates. Just as the position was improving came the cyclone, and we had to move large quantities of rice to Midnapore and the district of 24-Parganas to feed the starving people there. Late in December it became necessary to requisition two-thirds of the rice in Calcutta, but these were temporary expedients. For a long term policy we endeavoured first to secure regional agreement between this province, Bihar, Orissa and Eastern States for pooling all the resources and regional control on a commercial basis. The Conference proved inconclusive. We are engaged now in solving the problem on our own. We propose to create and maintain in Calcutta and at principal deficit areas a reserve of paddy or rice. This reserve would not be for consumption but for throwing on the market whenever necessary at moderate prices under a system of free trade. It is obvious that such a reserve can only be obtained on the new crop, and a good new crop. We have our agents now operating in the selected districts. We have fixed a ceiling price for purchase. As regards the price control on rice, that has already been relaxed on executive instructions to District Magistrates not to take action except in cases of gross profiteering. I hope we shall be able to build up a reserve as intended. Failing this our future policy must depend on whether we can succeed in creating a "bottle neck control" in rice at least in the now dominating market of Calcutta. In this connection I may point out that it did not produce the desired effect which we wanted. We have started a new system—we have given up the agency system. Under the new system the traders are authorised to buy at a reasonable price and give the cultivator a reasonable and fair price. Then instructions have been issued not to move any grains from a deficit district. If there is surplus in any district, the surplus could be removed from the district to other deficit districts only with the permission of the District Officer: without permit this cannot be done: the surplus rice would be bought up by Government. We hope to get the desired effect by this system and by this system Government will be the only buyer.

Now, Sir, with regard to wheat the Government of India put us into difficulties by fixing a price of wheat in the primary markets. Dealers were unable to buy at the controlled price, transport was difficult and uncertain and the supplies were therefore restricted. Recently the Government of India have decontrolled the price, but supplies have been coming in only in driblets. Our import of wheat into Calcutta, which should normally have been 18,000 tons a month, have during the last six months totalled only 25,965 tons. In January the supply was as little as 587 tons. We continue to impress upon the Government of India the urgent need for increasing the supply to this province specially for its industrial population. We hope that with the adoption of the new purchase policy by the Government of India the position will improve.

Then, Sir, with regard to *dal* and mustard, mustard seed grown in Bengal barely meets the requirements of the rural population; the urban

areas are met by imported seed from the United Provinces and Bihar. The price of seed is not controlled and owing to recent difficulties regarding transport and the raids which dispersed a proportion of the labour working in the Calcutta oil mills the supply has deteriorated. But a small stock of oil likely to meet Calcutta's requirements for about two weeks is now held on Government account by a leading Calcutta firm. The intention is to use it in case of emergency which might result in the city mills temporarily closing down.

Dal.—The disturbances in last August affected very seriously the supply of *dal* from Bihar. The prices rose very high. The position has somewhat improved since then, but local dealers have been unable to purchase *dal* at the producing centres at the locally controlled price. In November, the United Provinces Government thought fit to impose a ban on the export of *arhar* and shortly afterwards on all other varieties of *dal*. Our importers who had made large purchases in the United Provinces had their stocks suddenly immobilized. Our protest to the United Provinces and the Central Governments yielded no results. The Government of the United Provinces subsequently informed us in December that they would consign the *dal* so purchased to us. We accepted these arrangements, but so far no further reply has been received from that Government. On our renewed representation to the Government of India against our immediate demand of 75,000 maunds, our agents have lately received permits for a little over 2,000 maunds from the Bihar Government, *i.e.*, a little over one day's requirement of Calcutta. As in the case of wheat so this case demonstrates futility of attempts to safeguard the supply position of a deficit province without active assistance or protection from the Centre. We hope the position will improve with the new policy inaugurated by India.

Sugar.—The difficulty so long has been that the prices fixed by the Sugar Controller have been too low, specially for the sugar produced in Bengal, and that while the Sugar Controller prescribed a quota for Bengal, he left it to the mills to decide when and whereabout in Bengal they should send this sugar, and who should get it. An attempt was made first to control the sugar arriving in the province by issuing permits in favour of known dealers and other large *bonâ fide* consumers. This system failed to give satisfaction. An offer was then made to the trade to put up a scheme for distribution, and they were offered the services of a Government officer to act as Secretary, but nothing materialized. Sugar was requisitioned from time to time to meet immediate demands, but to keep control on sugar arriving it was necessary that the sugar should be despatched only to our nominees. The Controller lately agreed to this and the result has been the Bengal Sugar Licensing Order under which an attempt has been made to regulate the purchase, sale or storage of sugar except under and in accordance with a licence issued by the Provincial Government. We may have to revise quotas allotted to different areas and the channels of supply, but the present scheme has already had the beneficial result of making sugar readily available in the Calcutta markets. You do not have to queue up now for hours to obtain a seer of sugar.

Salt.—The honourable members are aware that the maximum price of salt has been pitched high, but this was done advisedly so as to keep supplies freely coming in. The price takes into consideration the cost of transport and the risk of furstration of cargo in which the importers may be involved. Arrangements have been made with the Government of India to secure vessels to carry the salt cargoes. The present position is that there is 16 lakh maunds of salt in the Government gola (adequate for two months) and the dealers have an additional supply for about three to four weeks.

Coal and kerosine.—I come now to coal and kerosine.

First regarding coal: The problem here is essentially one of transport. There is no dearth of coal. But the worst abuses relating to coal have almost been overcome. The Controller of Coal Distribution used to allot wagons to each colliery in proportion to the total volume of past business, and they were at liberty to sell them to whichever province they could. The province that bid highest for coal "loaded in wagons" carried away the wagons. Lately an agreement has been reached whereby Bengal has been allotted its own quota of wagons—Bengal's share being 3,600 wagons, placed at the disposal of the Director of Civil Supplies. The Director allots these wagons to individual coal-dealers on the recommendation of the Controller of Civil Supplies (for the requirements of the Calcutta area) and the District Magistrates for the districts. The price at the pitheads remains unfixed, but the Controller of Coal Distribution has obtained an informal agreement from the mining industry to the effect that they would not charge more than Rs. 16 per ton ex-pithead for the soft coke. There are still difficulties inasmuch as the collieries on one excuse or other have been avoiding entering into contracts with the coal-dealers to whom we have allotted wagons, and there is still the shortage of total wagons available. Retail sale by wholesalers at the railway depôts has been prohibited, and the price of retail sale has been fixed at Re. 1-9 per maund. With the strong action taken against a very big coal-dealer for disobeying the order against retail sale, it is hoped that so long wagons continue to be made available the supply for the city will not be allowed to fall short seriously.

Kerosine.—The oil companies who control distribution at the top-end have been most helpful. With their co-operation we have lately prepared a scheme for the distribution of kerosine oil throughout the province. I trust that honourable members appreciate that established trade connections in a commodity like kerosine cannot be easily disturbed and that areas of kerosine distribution do not always correspond with the areas of district jurisdiction. Under the scheme the District Magistrate is to be kept fully informed of the dealers selected by the agent and of the quota of oil allotted during the month and delivered to aprroved dealers or consumers during the month. The District Magistrate has the power to make supplies available to priority consumers.

Standard cloth.—Let me say a few words about standard cloth. The Provincial Government have now agreed to bear financial responsibilities for this scheme. Our quota for the quarter February-April is 75 lakh yards. For January we were promised 30 lakh yards and the consignment

is very shortly expected to arrive. We propose distribution in the first instance mainly in the jute-growing districts which have not been benefited from an increase in the price of paddy and in the district of Midnapore which has been affected by the recent cyclone. The actual distribution will be made through the existing trade channels, subject to the supervision and control of the officers.

I have endeavoured to indicate briefly the problem as I found, and the attempts that have been made to solve it. I do not claim that either the diagnosis of the problem or the methods adopted by us to solve it are beyond criticism. I beg that in this matter of making an adequate supply of foodstuffs and other necessaries of life let there be no party spirit. I welcome criticism and advice from all sections of the House.

Amendment to Special Motion moved by Khan Bahadur Saiyed Muazzamuddin Hosain.

Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR: Sir, I beg to move the following amendment:—

That for the words "ensuring supply and control of prices of food, cloth and other necessaries of life have been wholly inadequate and ineffective and urges Government to draw up immediately and implement a comprehensive scheme for supply and control of prices of food and other necessaries of life both in urban and rural areas, if necessary," the following words be substituted:—

"ensuring supply of food, clothing and other necessaries of life at controlled prices require revision in the light of experience so far gained and urges upon the Government to declare Bengal a deficit province immediately and take such steps as may be necessary for ensuring the supply of a minimum quota of food and other necessaries to all persons in rural as well as urban areas."

I would now, Sir, read the motion as it would stand if my amendment is carried:—

"That this Council is of opinion that the measures so far taken by the Government for ensuring supply of food, clothing and other necessaries of life at controlled prices require revision in the light of experience so far gained and urges upon the Government to declare Bengal a deficit province immediately and take such steps as may be necessary for ensuring the supply of a minimum quota of food and other necessaries to all persons in rural as well as urban areas in consultation with the leaders of all parties and other prominent members of both the Houses of Legislature who take interest in such matters."

Sir, it will be apparent that this amendment accepts a good deal of contention and the issues which have been raised by the Leader of the Opposition in his resolution.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: On a point of order, Sir. I think the amendment is too late. If it was to be moved at

all, it ought to have been moved yesterday when the original substantive motion was moved and discussed. But it is too late, and I do not think it will be in order if the amendment is moved and discussed today.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: My information is that the Hon'ble President accepted this short-notice amendment yesterday. It has been circulated this morning. So I don't think any objection can be raised at this stage.

Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR: Sir, as you have been pleased to hold, following the decision of the Hon'ble President, that this amendment can be moved today, no further discussion should take place on that question. I will therefore proceed with the amended resolution in the form in which I have placed it before the House. I am sure almost all the honourable members of the Opposition will agree with me that the question which we are seeking to discuss in the House today is of such a serious nature and affects so vitally the life and in fact the very existence of the population of the province that no party attitude, no opposition or criticism for the sake of mere criticism should be allowed to come into the discussion. It is a question where every member of the House has a serious part to play and a duty to perform towards the men and women of this province. Therefore, while it is perfectly legitimate and not only legitimate but necessary and a duty of the members of this House to offer criticisms where Government may have gone astray and to make constructive suggestions wherever they are felt to be necessary, yet at the same time it is equally binding that these criticisms and suggestions should be made in a spirit which avoids all party spirit and pays regard only to the seriousness of the problem and the gravity of the situation as it affects the population of the province. As the honourable members of the Opposition will realize, the amendment that I have moved recognises that the steps so far taken by Government have not proved adequate. I have therefore found it necessary to urge upon the Government the need of revising the steps they have taken in the light of experience so far gained, and in fact the statement placed before the House by the Hon'ble the Minister has made clear to the House that Government also, when they started dealing with the problem, proceeded in a tentative manner and, gradually, as they gained experience, they have taken steps to ensure that a sufficient quantity of food supply was available to the province. Therefore, there is agreement among both the Opposition members as well as the supporters of Government that this is a problem which requires very serious consideration. As regards the revision of the steps that have been taken, there also there is complete agreement, but I think members of the Opposition should not approach this problem in a spirit of opposition for the sake of opposition. If they attack the Ministry for mistakes that the Ministry themselves acknowledge and introduce a spirit of bitterness and acrimony into the debate, we shall gain nothing, and there is the possibility that in discussing this resolution we should only be wasting the time of the House in mere party squabbles. I would therefore urge the members of the Opposition to accept the amendment I have moved, as it recognises the necessity

of reviewing the situation and revise methods of dealing with it and in addition also makes certain concrete suggestions which unfortunately I do not find in the special motion so ably moved by the Leader of the Opposition. I think it is imperative that at this stage a declaration should be immediately made by Government that Bengal is a deficit province, and I think that that is the position that has been established by the answers that have been given by the Hon'ble Minister in reference to the questions that were asked in this place and in another place. I would also request the Hon'ble Minister to take the House into confidence and tell us if it is not a fact that the departmental officers who have been placed in charge of this problem have submitted a report to the Government that Bengal is now in a situation in which very soon a serious famine may overtake the province. Therefore this question of whether there is scarcity or not, whether Bengal is a deficit province or not, will be answered by the Government themselves, and I believe that Government will be compelled by the force of the situation to declare that Bengal is a deficit province. If Bengal is declared to be a deficit province, then certain consequences will immediately follow. The first consequence that will follow will be that if this province is a deficit province—and I think that there is very little reason to doubt that it is—Government will have to stop all further exports of rice to foreign ports. If that is done, then that will immediately relieve the situation to some extent. It will also give the Government of Bengal a handle to press upon the Government of India the necessity of persuading other provinces to sell rice to Bengal. A short while ago, there was a statement by the Premier of Assam that there was a surplus of rice available in Assam. In the papers I also remember to have seen that there is a surplus in Orissa as well. It is all a question—a difficult question perhaps—of transport, and inter-provincial control, but if the Government of Bengal declare Bengal to be a deficit province, then they can go to the Central Government with a good grace and demand that sufficient facilities should be given to the province of Bengal for importing more foodstuffs within the province. Therefore, Sir, these are the two questions to which I would request a reply from the Government. The first is whether it has been reported by the departmental officers that Bengal may very soon pass through a serious situation of famine. The second is whether it is not a fact that even now large exports are going on outside the province. If that be the case, that also ought to be stopped immediately Bengal is declared as a deficit province. After this first step is taken, we would suggest certain other steps, for more equitable distribution of the meagre stock of foodstuffs that is at present at the command of the Government. Arrangements should be made in different parts of the province to consolidate and distribute stocks. In the city of Calcutta the problem is very difficult, but an attempt to solve it must be made. In Calcutta as also in other small towns in the province Government must revise present methods and adopt improved means. It is the experience of the members of this House that whenever there has been any control of any article in the recent past the control has been followed by an immediate leap in the price of the commodities concerned. The reason is not difficult to understand.

Without any proper control over the source of supply if the Government suddenly erupt into the market and seek to control it, it cannot be affected. The result will certainly be an increase in price. I will give you, Sir, a glaring instance of Governmental incapacity which occurred three or four days ago. With regard to certain items Government announced that there would be rationing in Calcutta. If Government had any intention to enforce effective rationing, it should not have published their intention till that controlling scheme was ready—the scheme by which rationing could be enforced. By giving out their policy before the scheme was ready, before the Government was prepared to enforce the scheme, only frightened dealers and made them force up their prices, because they thought that once rationing comes into force, they could not have the margin of profit which they had before. Now, Sir, as a result of this announcement on the part of Government the price of rice has risen by Rs. 5 or Rs. 6 per maund within three or four days. I would like to impress upon the Hon'ble Minister that until Government have got their scheme and their organisation complete and ready, they should not allow half-baked programmes to come before the public only to frighten them and only to enable the dealers to make undue margins of profit. In support of my contention I have given one glaring instance, and this can be multiplied if necessary. Unless you control the source of supply, nothing can be done. Then, Sir, I pass to another glaring fact—I do not know if the Hon'ble Ministers and the Government have taken adequate notice of the fact that today although flour is not available in the market it is available if you go to the mills: there the workers are not only working full time, but they are working in two or three shifts daily: in the mills there is no scarcity of wheat. So wheat is available in the province: if it had not been available, then these mills could not have worked day and night—they cannot work on air: so what is coming into Bengal from outside. (Mr. J. B. Ross: That is army wheat.) Yes, I am coming to that. My friend Mr. Ross informs me that this is army wheat. The army has a right to demand adequate foodstuff. But equally the people—the civil population—of Bengal have got a right to demand adequate foodstuff for themselves, and that foodstuff should be supplied to them just as the army is being supplied. If the Government of India are not prepared to give adequate supply of rice and wheat to the Government of Bengal, then I would suggest an instrument by which the Government of Bengal can enforce its will. They should ask the Government of India to arrange to give Bengal supply from outside the province and provide sufficient transport for the purpose. If the Government of India do not agree, the Government of Bengal must compel agreement by levying a municipal octroi duty on army supplies coming into Bengal. This is within the competence of the Provincial Government, and I am confident that if the Government of Bengal threaten any such measure, the Government of India will yield and supply such transport as may be necessary for the essential needs of Bengal.

I would suggest the following rough scheme: I believe in Calcutta, the Corporation grants a licence for every shop which exists in the city. We can thus get from the Corporation a list of existing shops, and I know

that these are scattered in each locality. They come to the Corporation for licence and also supply to the Corporation a statement of their annual transactions. So, by a mere reference to the Calcutta Corporation, the Government could find out what are the usual stocks, taking the averages of the last three years, which these shops supply. If the Government use the machinery of these shops who have already got their organized staff to supply the daily requirements of the local clientele, they will be able to solve the problem of distribution easily. If supplies are made available to these shops at controlled prices, the shopkeepers would be able to distribute the foodstuff to the local people and Government might only keep a check on their distribution. Instead, what have Government done? We find today that small children, and even infirm men and women are standing in rows and queues and fighting—free fight often goes on between one individual and another as to who would go first to get his or her quota of rice, flour or kerosene, etc. In this connection I would like the Hon'ble Minister concerned to tell the House as to who was the officer whose inventive brain first concocted this diabolical scheme of supplying foodstuffs to one or two shops in each locality? Was it for the sake of extending patronage to one or two shops? And thinking at the same time that by so doing, by so making supplies available to selected shops in a locality, they will solve the problem? I am suggesting that Government should get the lists of licence-holders from the Calcutta Corporation and from those lists they would be able to know what is the outturn of each shop per year and then Government might be able to supply those shops according to these lists. I would suggest that the same sort of procedure might also be followed in the mofussil. It is not impossible for the District Magistrate or the Subdivisional Magistrate to find out what is the average sale of a particular shop. They have to look into the returns of the different shopkeepers. From these figures in the mofussil towns or in the district or subdivisional towns, the District Magistrate or the Subdivisional Officer or the Circle Officer might know what is the potential capacity of each of these shopkeepers and in this way the local people might be supplied with their requirements.

Therefore, Sir, if this step is taken, Government would be able to avoid those unseemly scenes which we very often see in the long queues in front of one or two shops opened by Government in a locality.

In the case of coal also, there are large-scale importers who are mostly known to Government. The Corporation also issues licences to them, for without licence nobody can carry on business in the city. Government have thus an instrument of control and they can very easily solve the difficult situation in which we find ourselves.

Then, Sir, the question may arise, as the Hon'ble Minister himself has suggested, regarding the facilities for transport. In many cases it has been found that the difficulty is about transport and not so much about want of supply. Sometimes it has been found that though the supplies are available in one locality there may be another locality where there is scarcity,

because of the transport difficulties. In such cases, I would ask the Government of Bengal to insist upon the Central Government to allot more wagons for Bengal. After all, civil supply is as much necessary as the military supply. It is imperative that there should be a minimum amount of food and clothing available to the civil population and if that is not ensured, the possibility of dangers which are inherent in the situation might make the civil administration impossible and serious consequence might follow. Therefore, the Government of Bengal should tell the Government of India that if they are not willing to give this Government necessary priorities, they might be forced to impose octroi duties on the articles that come within this province for military purposes. They should also threaten the Government of India with a proposal like that and also say that they would enforce this octroi duty on all military imports to municipal towns and localities of this province. The Government of India, I am confident, will allow the Government of Bengal such facilities in the distribution of wagons and transport facilities as might be necessary. I think all honourable members of this House ought to unite and put their heads together to solve this problem of food. Serious consequences might follow if the problem is not solved at once. It is for this reason that I have moved my amendment to this special motion. I have suggested in my amendment that leaders of every section of this House and of every party in this House should be consulted and also such representatives who are interested in the subject should be consulted in order to deal with the problem satisfactorily.

With these words, Sir, I commend my amendment for the acceptance of the House.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, order. Amendment moved: that for the words "ensuring supply and control of prices of food, cloth and other necessaries of life have been wholly inadequate and ineffective and urges Government to draw up immediately and implement a comprehensive scheme for supply and control of prices of food and other necessaries of life both in urban and rural areas, if necessary," the following words be substituted:—

"ensuring supply of food, clothing and other necessaries of life at controlled prices requires revision in the light of experience so far gained and urges upon the Government to declare Bengal a deficit province immediately and take such steps as may be necessary for ensuring the supply of a minimum quota of food and other necessaries to all persons in rural as well as urban areas."

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: Sir, I rise to oppose the amendment and I support the original substantive motion. I oppose the amendment for the simple reason that the amendment does not substitute anything new which is not in the substantive motion. In the lengthy speech which my honourable friend made just now nothing new has been brought out. There is absolutely no difference between the substantive motion and the proposed amendment. And I submit, Sir, that there is in the speech of my honourable friend complete justification of the substantive motion that has been moved by the Leader of the Opposition.

Sir, the Government have said that they applied to the Government of India for help; they said that they applied to the United Provinces Government for a partial solution of the food problem; they only got rebuff. The fact is that they failed to impress any of them. Sir, our criticism is that the present Government has completely mishandled the situation and they have bungled the whole position; and it is on account of their incompetence and inactivity that the present situation has arisen. As a matter of fact, Sir, Bengal's situation now has become desperate. Famine is staring us in the face, and people in many places are actually starving. I therefore think that the House should be given every opportunity to declare its opinion on the failure of Government to deal effectively with this most serious problem.

Mr. KRISHNA CHANDRA ROY CHOWDHURY: Sir, I rise to criticise the comments made by my honourable friend on the Opposition just now, and I second the amendment before us. Sir, it is all very fine to say that the Bengal Ministry is responsible for the present situation of the province with regard to food. Sir, everybody knows that food is a problem all over India. If you go to Bombay, you will see the same state of things there. If you go to Madras, there is the same old cry there. I say, Sir, that truth is to be told and the truth has to be faced. Frankly speaking, Sir, we use sugar, we use wheat and we use kerosene oil. But how can the Ministry be responsible for the scarcity of any of these articles? They are not produced in Bengal but they have to be imported from other places, and it is due to transport difficulty that this has happened. So, Sir, there is no use holding the Ministry solely responsible for all this terrible crisis that has befallen us.

At the same time it must be noted that it is the permanent officials that reign supreme in this Department of Civil Supply and we have really to criticise the rules and regulations and the system of control devised by these permanent officials. I agree with Mr. McFarlane who said yesterday that the civil servants are all right as an administrative agency, but that they are no good in the matter of purchasing and selling or tracing where hoarders and profiteers go. I would therefore suggest that the Government of Bengal should take immediate notice of these profiteerings and hoardings and send a wire to the Government of India to make a more drastic ordinance and this ordinance should provide not merely imprisonment and fine but flogging and whipping of these profiteers at public places and at market places. Whipping and flogging, Sir,—that should be the law and once that is resorted to I think these profiteers and hoarders will make themselves scarce. With these remarks I shall confine myself to the industrial labour. One friend of the European group has referred to army wheat how being milled in Bengal mills some moments ago, but what about the wheat of the industrial army? It is the industrial labourers who are responsible for the equipments of the army, it is they who help in keeping the soldier on the battle field; therefore it is most important that we must look to the interests of the industrial labour which is producing equipments and armaments. But, Sir, what is being done? We have heard that some

mills are on strike and more and more mills will soon go on strike. There was shooting and rioting in many areas and free fighting was going on and why is it so? It is all because they, I mean the labourers, were not able to get rice. The question of sugar, butter and oil, etc., does not trouble these men. The barest necessities of life will content these men. *Atta* they do not care for, which is the prime necessity of the up-country people, but give them rice and they will be satisfied. And why is it that their employers are not getting rice for them? Who is to blame for this? And does not this responsible Government see that these industrial workers are strong enough to create endless trouble and riots even, and can surround the whole Assembly Hall and make our going out impossible? So it may be expected that these industrial workers may create great troubles and riots. Therefore we must keep the industrial labour contented. Trade Union leaders were summoned to Writers' Buildings and along with them I too was asked and we met Mr. Pinnell, the Special Officer. Mr. Pinnell took us into complete confidence and he told us of what was happening and confessed to my utter surprise that he had to condone hoarding and profiteering. He also told us that he knew of the existence of the black markets and that profiteering, hoarding and black markets—all these were going in his very face but he had no power to stop them. For powers they had applied to the Government of India and a special ordinance was only issued some time back by which they had the power of prosecuting these men and confiscating their goods. But how many prosecutions and convictions have been made at all? Only a very few and only a Rai Bahadur or so have been prosecuted. It is all mere nonsense. Everybody knows that this profiteering is going on quite merrily. In my *para* there was a marriage ceremony and a large number of people were entertained and fed; flour was purchased at Rs. 50 a maund from somewhere in Cotton street, Burrabazar, which is the home of the black market. Are the permanent officials going to prosecute these people in Burrabazar and take orders for the flogging of these wealthy merchants in Burrabazar? But if flogging is resorted to, then I am sure things will improve. I believe that the new ordinance has given this Government some power that I recommend or more. I believe the new ordinance has some of the powers they wanted. We want the application of that power; but up to now we have seen very little of that. Now, Sir, let us see what is happening to the mill areas: take for instance the Bhatpara mill area: there is a mill population of about 50,000 out of a total number of 96,000 in the Bhatpara area. These people live on rice and *dal*: they are not rich men and do not take and cannot afford to pay for other things—only rice and *dal* they take. If you want to feed them moderately it would require 1,200 maunds of rice daily. This is only for the workers, without taking into account their families, although about 33 per cent. of the total mill workers have got their families here. Excluding their families if you want to give them full meal you will have to supply 1,200 maunds of rice per day for Bhatpara area only: they are not getting half of this: that is why there has been strike in the Hukum Chand Jute Mill. The Hukum Chand Jute Mill Company were not able to supply them enough rice. Moreover the mill

authorities are totally oblivious of the existence of the families of the 33 per cent. of the millhands—they are only given ¾ seer of rice a day, that is why they are discontented. The other day the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Agriculture said that there is deficit of rice in Bengal: the demand is 9 million tons and the production is 7 million. So it is a deficit province. I would suggest that rice may be bought from Assam and Orissa. There is no one to prevent it: you can do so subject to certain transport restrictions.

Then, Sir, the Trade Union representatives urged Government to help workers to constitute co-operative sale societies and request the employers to convert their shops into co-operative sale societies for management by workers' representatives, but the Bengal Chamber of Commerce would not listen to this suggestion and the Bengal Chamber employers purchase rice through agents and brokers who charge good commission. The unconscionable inflation in the rice markets of Bengal puzzles all economists. Assuming that the Government forecast of 7 million tons of rice as against 9 million requirements proves correct, price levels of rice could go up to 33 per cent. and not more than that: but not 300 per cent.: how is it then that the coarse rice which used to be sold before the war at Rs. 4-8 per maund is today Rs. 16-8 per maund—a rise of 400 per cent. Therefore logically and according to the economic law the price cannot rise more than 35 or 40 or 50 per cent. assuming the forecast correct. But there is no limit to the rise of the price of rice and it is a puzzle how can it be so. It is a puzzle and this puzzle is that of hoarding and profiteering. Therefore, let us all concentrate our efforts to have these hoarders and profiteers whipped and flogged in every town as was the ancient practice of flogging the sinners in the market places. The only remedy is, as I said, wholesale confiscation and merciless flogging and whipping. From my bitter experience of sales of rice and sugar in licensed shops, I would strongly recommend employment of military men to supervise these sales so that the shopkeepsrs do not get any chance to sell above controlled rates to bazar dealers and deprive hunger-stricken citizens standing in queues for hours and hours.

Sir, committees to help the Civil Supply officials will be useless unless detection of hoarding and profiteering is left in the hands of military men. Sir, thousands of employees in Government offices are not getting any supplies at controlled rates, whereas thousands of mercantile clerks in Clive Street enjoy that benefit. It is time that Government follows commercial employees' footsteps in this matter. There is a strong suspicion among educated and uneducated citizens of Calcutta and elsewhere that there is corruption and bribery from top to bottom in the Supply Department, and that hoarders and profiteers thrive on bribery. It is high time that Government takes drastic steps to stop or even check this. I would offer some constructive suggestions on the floor of this House. Let Government offer good rewards to informers out of funds raised from confiscation—information regarding profiteering and hoarding and bribery should be dealt with by a department separate from the Civil Supply Department. Sir, Government should think deeply in the matter and see that the people do not

harbour any suspicion. Government should take the Ramkrishna Mission and other mission people into their confidence and seek their help in the matter of distribution and supply of foodstuffs. Sir, I see many things of corruption in the mill area, and also in Calcutta I see that dummies are made to purchase articles of food such as sugar, rice, etc., at controlled shops and supply them to dealers. This thing is done at the cost of the legitimate buyers. Sir, let the Ministers go out into the markets and see the state of affairs with their own eyes, as King Haroon-al-Raschid of Arabian Nights tale used to do in the olden days.

Mr. J. B. ROSS: On a point of information. How long is the honourable member allowed to speak, speaking on a motion? As it is, he has already exceeded his 15 minutes' time-limit.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Ordinarily, the mover and the Minister in charge of the department are entitled to speak for thirty minutes and other members are entitled to 15 minutes only.

Mr. KRISHNA CHANDRA ROY CHOWDHURY: All right, I will now make a short shrift and sit down leaving Mr. Ross to say something on the subject of coal and distribution of wagons.

Mr. J. B. ROSS: I will oblige my friend Mr. Krishna Chandra Roy Chowdhury to the extent of saying something on the motion before the House, but I do not intend to speak about the coal position at all. Sir, Mr. Roy Chowdhury levelled certain criticisms against the Bengal Chamber of Commerce during his speech which are completely misinformed and are not based upon fact. He said that the Bengal Chamber of Commerce sent out brokers into the market to purchase rice for distribution among its assistants and indicated thereby that things were not quite above board. As a matter of fact under present conditions the Bengal Chamber cannot buy; the monopoly of purchase now rests entirely with the Government. Mr. Roy Chowdhury may also be interested to know that the jute mills section of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce is buying rice today at Rs. 14 per maund for distribution among its labour force at somewhere below Rs. 10. I do not think that any criticisms can therefore be levelled against the Bengal Chamber as Mr. Roy Chowdhury has attempted to do.

In regard to the motion before the House I listened with a good deal of attention to what the Hon'ble Minister had to say, if one could listen with any attention to a speech that was gabbled out so speedily. There is no doubt that Government have attempted to tackle the food problem, but there is also no doubt that they have allowed the position to get completely out of hand. The fundamental problem in the province at this moment is an adequate supply of rice. There are a large number of *atta*-eaters in this area. We had heard a good deal some three months about Government arranging with the British Government that ship loads of wheat were to arrive at Calcutta from Australia to supply the requirements of the

civil population, but we have not heard a single word about those shipments from the Hon'ble Minister, and I feel on the other hand that if those shipments were to materialise the rice position in this province would be considerably relieved. The Hon'ble Minister has said that a Grains Purchasing Officer has been appointed and that he and his staff have the monopoly of the purchase of rice in the province. But, Sir, there are certain forces at work which are preventing that officer and his staff from carrying out their duties satisfactorily. My friend Mr. Humayun Kabir gave one illustration and that is in the announcement by the Government of the proposal to introduce a rationing scheme in the province which will take months to materialise, but the announcement has created a bull point for speculators. It has enabled those who hold large stocks to hold for higher prices. Another instance which shows that in these very important matters how careful the Ministers have to be—on the 24th of February the Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture in reply to a question said that the estimated production of rice in Bengal for 1942-43 was 6,938,800 tons. This production was estimated by him (for 1942-43) to be 23 per cent. short of the requirements of the province. The Hon'ble Minister was further questioned as to the quantity of rice exported from the province during the same: he replied that he had no information. This is an astounding reply. The Hon'ble Minister in charge of Commerce and Labour in reply to similar questions has always taken the attitude that in the present state of statistics and in the absence of any accurate figure of actual *per capita* consumption, no dependable figures of surplus or deficits could be produced. Official communiqués moreover have made it clear that the shortage was small—somewhere in the neighbourhood of 5 per cent. We should like to know in the first place what is the basis of the figures supplied by the Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture. If they are based on unreliable statistics then they should not have been given without qualification and a very serious mistake has been made. Secondly, was the Hon'ble Minister for Commerce and Labour or the Director of Civil Supplies consulted in regard to these figures? The reply suggests a serious lack of co-ordination between the Department of Agriculture and the Directorate of Civil Supplies. It is obvious that a reply of this nature, if correct, must have the effect of aggravating the position. In fact it must inevitably encourage a tendency on the part of cultivators and stockists in rural areas to hoard. If a responsible Minister concerned makes an announcement that there is a deficit of 23 per cent., it must immediately result in the speculator making the most of it for his own benefit. It must result in an immediate rise in prices. If the Government are convinced that the figures given are substantially correct, then they should be endeavouring to secure additional supplies from other provinces and they should be seeking the help of the Government of India in this respect. There is no indication from the Hon'ble Minister that he has taken any such action. If on the other hand Government consider that these figures about rice are unreliable, then surely the first and foremost step is to use the whole machinery of the administration to ascertain the actual fact. We are unable to believe that with the help of the Director of Land Records and his officers, with the help of the Department of

Agriculture and their officers, with the help of District Officers and their staff,—all concentrating upon this purpose—a reliable estimate cannot be obtained. Until, however, we have accurate figures all schemes are based on unreliability and we are courting disaster.

Now, Sir, with regard to rice, the position in Calcutta and certain deficit rural areas has become extremely serious during the past six weeks. Last week rice was selling in Calcutta at Rs. 20 per maund. This was confirmed by personal observation by me in Mallik Bazar. This week it is selling at Rs. 22-8. As a matter of fact, my own personal servant came to me for a subvention to enable him to buy rice because he could not pay the price now prevailing in the market. Coarse rice is unobtainable in the market. It is difficult also to get medium rice. Government have opened shops in 25 markets but there, I understand, only 500 maunds of rice are made available to each market a week, and the rice there is only of the fine variety which is being sold at annas 5-3 per seer. Individuals can purchase 5 seers a day and there is nothing to prevent a well-to-do purchaser purchasing 5 seers from each shop in the market. As my friend Mr. Roy Chowdhury has said, these well-to-do purchasers send dummies to every shop and thus get a large quantity of rice for disposal later at a higher price.

Needless to say, it is not the *bustee* people who are getting the benefit of these supplies—or at best only a small fraction of them. What is happening in practice is that dealers from all parts of Calcutta are sending their agents to stand in queues and buy up these supplies.

I am afraid, Sir, I have exhausted my time. I had a good deal more to say about what I want Government to do.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I shall be very glad to give you some few minutes more.

Mr. J. B. ROSS: Thank you, Sir.

Outside these controlled markets there are about 150 controlled shops where coarse rice is supposed to be sold at, I understand, annas 3 per seer. In practice, however, supplies to these shops are irregular and inadequate and a large proportion of the long queques attending these shops have to go away disappointed. Here also the queues are being exploited by other dealers who sent agents to buy up supplies. Government are considering a rationing scheme, but it would take months before this could be brought into force. Why in the meantime are Government not making supplies of coarse and medium rice available in the controlled markets? These are more urgently required than any other type. Why are they not increasing the number of controlled shops by giving them larger and regular supplies?

At the beginning of my speech I have pointed out the indiscretion of the Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture in making a statement that as the production was less than the demand the Foodgrains Purchasing Officer could not function satisfactorily due to the price of rice having shot up.

Government are reported to have made substantial purchases in the surplus rural areas. What are they doing with these purchases? We can see no evidence that the Hon'ble Ministers have been applying their minds and their energies to the food problem. I claim my right to criticise the Ministry in this connection, because, in spite of the disclaimer of the Hon'ble Minister of Commerce and Labour that they could have done better, they appear to us only to be absorbed at the moment in party and political questions and in the problem of remaining in power. The Hon'ble Ministers have a great responsibility for this problem and they cannot evade it by stating that they had left it to departmental officials to solve. If they have done so then they must support their officials and they cannot complain that mistakes have been made. Their very serious responsibility for these mistakes, however, I submit, remains.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I shall now adjourn the House. The House stands adjourned till 1-30 p.m. on Thursday, the 11th March, 1943, when non-official resolutions would be taken up.

Adjournment.

The Council then adjourned till 1-30 p.m. on Thursday, the 11th March, 1943.

Members absent.

The following members were absent from the meeting held on the 9th March, 1942:—

(1) Khan Bahadur Naziruddin Ahmad.

(2) Rai Bahadur Keshab Chandra Banerjee.

(3) Mr. Humayun Reza Chowdhury.

(4) Khan Bahadur Rezzaqul Haider Chowdhury.

(5) Mr. Narendra Chandra Datta.

(6) The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. Abdul Karim.

(7) Dr. Radha Kumud Mookerji.

(8) Khan Bahadur Ataur Rahman.

(9) Mr. Birendra Kishore Roy Chowdhury.

(10) Rai Sahib Jatindra Mohan Sen.

(11) The Hon'ble Sir Bijoy Prasad Singh Roy.

BENGAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DEBATES

First Session, 1943—No. 15.

THE COUNCIL met in the Legislative Chamber of the Legislative Building, Calcutta, on Thursday, the 11th March, 1943, at 1-30 p.m., being the fifteenth day of the First Session of 1943, pursuant to section 62(2)(a) of the Government of India Act, 1935.

Mr. President (the Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY, K.C.I.E.) was in the Chair.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Public Health Department.

65. Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN (on behalf of Khan Sahib Abdul Aziz): (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be pleased to state what is the total number of officers and other staff now working (*i*) in the medical services and department, (*ii*) in the public health services and departments and (*iii*) in office of these departments in Bengal?

(*b*) Out of these, how many are Moslems and how many are non-Moslems in each class and in each grade of these services and in the staff of these departments?

(*c*) What is the respective percentage of Moslems and non-Moslems in all these services and the staff of these departments?

(*d*) Do the Communal Ratio Rules apply to all the services under these departments?

(*e*) If not, to what class of services do they not apply?

(*f*) Do the Government intend to adopt such measures as are feasible to make up the deficiency, if any, in the proportion of Moslems in all the services? If so, what are they? If not, why not?

MINISTER in charge of the PUBLIC HEALTH and LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu): The information is being collected and will be supplied as soon as possible.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Shall we get the information within this session?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I am trying to expedite the matter as much as possible; but I am not certain that I shall be able to give you the information within this session.

Flood in Kandi.

66. Mr. RANAJIT PAL CHOWDHURY: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Communications and Works Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether it is a fact that during the rainy season the whole neighbouring tract of country, near Purandarpur village, on the

west of Radharghat Road, in Kandi subdivision, in Murshidabad district, becomes heavily inundated by the embankment at Banks endangering life and property and damaging crops and cultivation;

(*b*) whether this fact has been duly brought to the notice of the District authorities by the local residents;

(*c*) whether in April, 1942, the affected area was in consequence inspected by the then District Magistrate, Mr. Hiran Lal Mukherjee, along with Prince Kasim Ali Mirza and Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal, M.L.A.;

(*d*) whether as a result of that local investigation, the Executive Engineer, Nadia-Murshidabad, was charged with further investigation into the matter and to send up a report; and

(*e*) the result that has ensued so far as an outcome of that enquiry and investigation?

MINISTER in charge of the COMMUNICATIONS and WORKS DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Shamsuddin Ahmed): I have called for information and will supply it to the honourable member in due course.

Mr. RANAJIT PAL CHOWDHURY: I asked a good number of questions over a month ago, but I have not got answers to any one of them as yet.

The Hon'ble Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: I have written to different sources for information, and I have myself asked them to expedite the whole thing so that answers may be given as quickly as possible.

Mr. RANAJIT PAL CHOWDHURY: Sir, besides this, there are many other questions which I have asked but so far I have got answers to none of my questions.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I mentioned the matter to the Government, and they have promised to look into the question and expedite the replies as far as possible.

Mr. RANAJIT PAL CHOWDHURY: Thank you, Sir.

Forest and Excise Department.

67. Mr. NUR AHMED: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Forest and Excise Department be pleased to state what is the total number of officers and other staff at present, respectively, in the Forest and Excise Branches and working under these Branches?

(*b*) What is the total number of Moslem and non-Moslem officers, respectively, in all classes of services under these two Branches on the 30th November, 1942?

(*c*) What is the percentage of Moslems and non-Moslems, respectively, in all these services under these two Branches on that date?

(*d*) Do the Communal Ratio Rules apply to all the services under these two Branches?

(*e*) If not, to what class or classes of services do not these rules apply and why do they not apply?

(*f*) Do the Government intend to take such measures as are deemed feasible to make up the deficiency in Moslem percentage, if any, in any of these services? If so, what are they? If not, why not?

MINISTER in charge of the FOREST and EXCISE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Upendra Nath Barman): (*a*) A statement is laid on the Table.

(*b*) and (*c*) A statement is laid on the Table.

(*d*) and (*e*) Yes, excepting the Forest Guards' and the Watchers' services in the Darjeeling and the Chittagong Hill Tracts as provided in the Bengal Services Recruitment (Communal Ratio) Rules.

(*f*) Special instructions have been issued to appointing authorities to reserve a larger number of vacancies where there is marked deficiency in the representation of any particular community in order to make good the deficiency as speedily as possible.

Statements referred to in the reply to question No. 67.

	Total number of officers.
EXCISE DEPARTMENT.	
Bengal Excise Service	29
Bengal Junior Excise Service	42
Bengal General Service (Ex. Prosecutor)	1
Subordinate Excise Service—	
(*a*) Sub-Inspectors	255
(*b*) Petty Officers	113
Clerical Service—	
(*a*) Excise Commissioners' Office	31
(*b*) Excise Collectors' Office	19
Excise peons	1,001
Launch and Boat Establishment	25
FOREST DEPARTMENT.	
Indian Forest Service	15(*a*)
Bengal Forest Service (old)	5(*a*)
Bengal Forest Service (new)	11
Acting Assistant Forest Officers	3
Subordinate Forest Service—	
(*a*) Forest Ranger	76
(*b*) Deputy Ranger	60
(*c*) Foresters	214
Clerical Service—	
Forest Guards	111
Forest Guards and	231(*b*)
Watchers (temporary)	209(*b*)

(*a*) Recruitment stopped.
(*b*) Shows position on the 30th March, 1942, present position cannot be given without reference to local officers.

Name of service.	Total number of Muslims.	Total number of non-Muslims.	Percentage of Muslims.	Percentage of non-Muslims.
EXCISE DEPARTMENT.				
Bengal Excise Service	14	14	50	50
Bengal Junior Excise Service	22	21	51	49
Bengal General Service (Excise Prosecuter) ..	..	1	0	100
Subordinate Excise Service—				
(a) Sub-Inspector	94	148	38·8	61·2
(b) Petty officers	57	58	49·6	50·4
Clerical Service—				
(a) Excise Commissioner's office ..	13	17	43·3	56·7
(b) Excise Collector's Office	9	10	47·36	52·64
Excise peons	Information not readily available.			
Launch and Boat Establishment ..				
FOREST DEPARTMENT.				
Indian Forest Service	1	14	6·66	93·34
Bengal Forest Service (old)	1	4	20	80
Bengal Forest Service (new)	2	9	18·18	81·82
Acting Assistant Forest Officers	..	3	..	100
Subordinate Forest Service—				
(a) Rangers	13	63	17·1	82·9
(b) Deputy Rangers	11	49	18·33	81·67
(c) Forest Rangers	79	135	36·9	63·1
Clerical Service	27	84	24·32	75·68
*Forest Guards	74	157	32	68
*Forest Guards and Watchers (temporary)	81	128	38·75	61·25

*Position as on the 30th March, 1942.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: With reference to the statement under the Forest Department——

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I am sorry, Sir, I want to mention that there is a printing mistake in (c) in the last statement under "Subordinate Forest Service", namely, that in place of "Forest Rangers" it should be "Foresters".

Mr. PRESIDENT: Yes, Khan Bahadur.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state what is the reason for the representation of the Muslim community being so low in this department, namely, in the Forest Department?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: The reason is that the communal ratio rules were only introduced in the year 1940. Almost all the officers serving in the department had been appointed before that year. But now that communal ratio rules will be applied the deficiency will be rectified in the near future.

Mr. PRESIDENT: What about the questions standing over?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: The Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur is busy elsewhere and I do not know, Sir, if he will be able to be present at a subsequent stage today.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Very well, the questions will be taken up tomorrow, when I hope the Hon'ble Minister will be able to be present.

Non-official Resolutions.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The House will now proceed with the resolution of Mr. Latafat Hossain together with the two amendments moved by Mr. Nur Ahmed.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: So far as we are concerned we have no objection to the amendment moved by my esteemed friend Mr. Nur Ahmed.

Mr. PRESIDENT: There is no question of your objection to or agreement with the amendment. Any member can speak on the amendment itself.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: If the amendment is allowed to be discussed then I may speak on it.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Well, Khan Bahadur, the main resolution as well as the amendment is before the House and you can speak in a general way on both of them. You will of course have a right of reply.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: No, Sir, I have not moved the main motion.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Oh, I am sorry.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Then I shall speak on the whole subject. Sir, the amendment which has been moved by my esteemed friend Mr. Nur Ahmed is only one in number and not two.

Mr. PRESIDENT: No, no. Mr. Nur Ahmed has moved two amendments.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: The third amendment on the paper refers to Begum Hamid Momin's resolution.

Mr. PRESIDENT: No, no. Look at amendment No. 1 on the paper. Nos. 1 and 2 have been moved by Mr. Nur Ahmed.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: All right, Sir. I beg your pardon. I think the amendment is very desirable so that the attention of the Government may be particularly drawn to this special subject. All that is wanted by this resolution is that Government should take a decision immediately and then implement those decisions in the next financial year. In view of the general opinion that the Permanent Settlement is an anachronism, and an incubus on the economic structure of Bengal that the last Ministry had appointed a Commission to enquire and report regarding the advantages and disadvantages of the Permanent Settlement and *inter alia* to make suggestions for revision and reconstruction of the entire revenue system of Bengal. The Commission toured in different parts of India, examined a large number of witnesses, collected

important statistics, finished its labours in about 15 months and submitted a report recommending the cancellation of the Permanent Settlement, the establishment of the *raiyatwari* system in its place by bringing the actual cultivators directly under the Paramount Power. They also made some important recommendations for modification of the tenancy laws and suggested means for improving the economic condition of the people in general and of agriculturists in particular.

The report was submitted so far back as 21st March, 1940. The report was examined by a Special Officer, who submitted his report on the 29th July, 1940. That report remained confidential for a very long time and was not made public until towards the beginning of 1941. The whole matter was discussed thoroughly in both the Houses of Legislature and views of different interests were expressed during those discussions. Since then more than 1½ years have elapsed but nothing has been done by Government. The outgoing Government was contemplating to impose an agricultural tax pending cancellation of the Permanent Settlement as recommended by the Land Revenue Commission, and, as a matter of fact, a Bill was published in the Government gazette; but since then nothing has been heard of. Some eight months ago leaders of parties in the Legislature were invited to discuss the Land Revenue Commission report with th Revenue Minister; but at the eleventh hour, for reasons best known, the meeting was postponed *sine die* and nothing was heard about the Commission's recommendations since then. Only two months ago the Chief Minister published a note which he characterised as his personal making certain desultory suggestions as to how he thought the recommendations of the Land Revenue Commission could be partially implemented. His suggestions were apparently so impractical and absurd that they hardly deserved any detailed scrutiny. His idea was that all the zemindaries and tenures should be taken over by the Government and the owners thereof paid *malikana* at 50 per cent. of their actual net income for all time to come, and then the rents of the *raiyats* might be fixed at one-sixth of the value of the gross produce—the *raiyat* being excused from payment of all cesses, *e.g.*, road cess, education cess, union rate, etc. The Chief Minister apparently had no idea that the number of estates in Bengal is a little over a lakh and the number of non-agricultural proprietors is 783,000. The number of tenures in Bengal according to the Table VI(*a*) of the report is over 27 lakhs and so even at the average rate of 4 persons holding each tenure, the number of tenure-holders will be over a crore. Government is hardly being able to keep even the register of proprietors of estates with only 8 lakhs names up to date. Will it be possible for Government to maintain a register of tenure-holders far above 1 crore and at the same time to make arrangement for payment of *malikana* to each and every one of them? The House is entitled to know why the informal conference of the leaders of the parties in the Legislature with revenue experts which was decided upon, was postponed *sine die*. Why nothing is being done to implement the recommendations of the Land Revenue Commission over which lakhs have been spent from the public money. The public whose money has been spent has a right to know if the

Government intends or does not intend to take decision on the recommendations of the Commission. What are the reasons for Government's adopting a shilly-shally policy with regard to this important matter which vitally affects the agricultural population of Bengal? In this connection I would quote the conclusion arrived at by the Commission:

"Nevertheless the majority of the Commission hold the view that in the interests of the province as a whole the present land tenure system cannot remain unaltered.

In fact if the present condition continues; it may not be too much to say that the system will breakdown of its own accord. It is unsuited to modern conditions and has brought about a situation in the province in which the welfare of agriculture is neglected and a great proportion of the wealth from the land is appropriated by middlemen most of whom have no connection with agriculture and have treated the land simply as a commercial investment."

Even our esteemed friend Dr. Radha Kumud Mookerji admits that "agricultural improvement is nobody's business" according to the condition now prevailing in the country. He has also stated in his note of dissent "The chief defect of the existing land revenue system is its indifference to agricultural improvements. The improvement of land is not the concern of any of the landed classes. Everybody's business is nobody's business. The zamindar says that he is no longer responsible for improvement of land when the law has destroyed the incentives to such improvements." Government would on the other hand say that the zamindar has got incentive because if improvement is effected, the zamindar is entitled to get some enhancement in the rent of the land so improved, but Government have apparently no incentive at all, because Government revenue is not increased by effecting improvement in the land held by the tenants. So the result is neither the Government care for the improvement of the lands of the *raiyat* nor the zamindars care to make any improvement of the lands and the tenants are too poor to undertake any such improvement for increasing the fertility of their lands. Sir, the ultimate result is that agriculture is entirely neglected. Even Dr. Radha Kumud Mookerji in his note of dissent admits, though he is against the nationalization of lands, that the yield of paddy in Bengal is less than one-third of Japan, less than one-fourth of Egypt, one-fifth of Italy and one-sixth of Spain. Sir, Bengal, in spite of its being proverbially fertile produces less than one-sixth of what is produce in Spain. How long shall we allow our agriculture to remain neglected? Bengal is an agricultural country where 77 per cent. of the people are engaged in agriculture. It will be criminal to neglect her agriculture. Agriculturists are now in a desperate position. They cannot make their two ends meet. Number of uneconomic holdings has been increasing by strides and even now 60 per cent. of the holdings are uneconomic. You cannot make any substantial improvement in agriculture unless the whole fabric of land system is overhauled. Then there is also the question of inelasticity of land revenue which is responsible for the said financial plight of Bengal. Inadequacy of Bengal's revenue is not only due to Meston Award but also

on account of the inelasticity of land revenue. In 1928-29, Bengal had only 10·97 crores for 46·6 million of people, whereas Madras had 17·53 crores for serving a population of 42 million, Bombay 15·22 crores for 19 million people, which is far less than half of Bengal.

Bengal's revenue but for the Permanent Settlement would have increased at least by 8 crores or by about 75 per cent. Will the country allow this 8 crores to be intercepted by middlemen for all time to come and thereby starve their nation-building departments?

The opinion expressed in the resolution before us is not to give effect to the recommendation all at once, but to take decision on the recommendation and thereafter to implement the recommendations with such modifications as may be decided upon. A start could certainly be given by accepting the recommendation about reduction under section 112 of rents which are abnormally high and by stopping all enhancement until the present land system was changed as recommended by the Commission and by imposing agricultural income-tax for improvement of agriculture and many other recommendations which could be usefully given effect to without creating much bad blood between conflicting interests. The recommendations about nationalisation of land could also be discussed with experts and some experiments made in certain limited areas with a view to find out possibilities of nationalisation on lines of least resistance.

If the resolution is accepted and I see no reason why it should not, the Government will be only doing its duty to the agriculturists of Bengal who are the backbone of this country.

Sir, I quote a few figures to show how Bengal has been suffering on account of this incubus of Permanent Settlement. In provinces where *raiyatwari* settlement prevails, the revenue is liable to be increased and Government's contribution there has been much more, because Government know that in spending money they will be bringing money to the State coffer. Sir, Bengal Government's total contribution towards irrigation and navigation of the province up till now is only 5 crores and odd, whereas in the small province of Sind which is smaller than Mymensingh district they spend as much as 29 crores for the improvement of irrigation and navigation and the Punjab spends 34 crores, the United Provinces 28 crores, Bombay 10 crores and Madras 20 crores. These figures show how agriculture in Bengal is being neglected and Government cannot help it because of the inelasticity of its revenue. As a matter of fact, the income of Government is very limited. We have already seen that as compared with other provinces Bengal with its large population and large areas is getting far less as revenue from all her sources than the other provinces of India, and unless this incubus of Permanent Settlement is removed, I don't think there is any prospect in the near future of our agriculture being improved to any very great extent. Government is no doubt spending some lakhs of rupees with which only a few demonstration firms are run and some seeds which are said to be improved departmental seeds are distributed, but Government's staff for agriculture work is far smaller than

that of other provinces. In the Punjab the staff for this work is more than three times of what it is in Bengal. Sir, we have been to other provinces of India and we have found that where there is a *raiyatwari* settlement directly under Government, tenants there are far better off. They are far better looked after in times of distress and in times of other climatic disasters. It is time that Government should seriously consider the position; they have got all the materials before them, and all that they have to do is to make up their mind to take a decision. Let there be called an informal conference of the leaders of the parties and experts as was originally contemplated and let a decision be taken. I do not say that the decision should necessarily be that the Permanent Settlement should be done away with, but let us put our heads together and find out what can be done for improving the economic condition of this country. Agriculture is starving and that too in an agricultural country like Bengal. It is a shame and disgrace I should say if we allow agriculture to be neglected in this way. The tenant is unable to effect any improvement because of his proverbial poverty, and for this poverty he cannot purchase even manures for his land. Moreover, the land has become exhausted and production is gradually diminishing. The zamindar is not paying any attention because he is concerned with the realisation of rent only and Government too is unable to do anything because of the inelasticity of land revenue. This state of things must be put an end to and Government must take courage in both hands and must do something immediately. Some of the recommendations of the Commission as I have already said can be given effect to without any great difficulty —for instance, the recommendation about the imposition of an agricultural income-tax which is to be earmarked entirely for agricultural improvement. This is one of the recommendations of the Commission which can be given effect to immediately if the Ministry chooses to do so.

I hope, Sir, that the resolution which has been moved by my friend Mr. Latafat Hossain will be accepted by the House without any division.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Mr. President, Sir, I shall first deal with the amendments. The original motion of my friend Mr. Latafat Hossain was to the following effect, *viz.*, that this Council is of opinion that the Government should without delay take decision on the recommendations of the Floud Commission and give effect to the decisions within the next financial year.

Mr. President, Sir, the resolution resolves itself into two parts. The first part deals with a decision by the Government on the recommendations of the Floud Commission and the second part, which is the operative part, enjoins on Government the necessity of giving effect to those decisions within the next financial year. I take it that the next financial year will begin from the 1st April, 1943, and will come to an end on the 31st March, 1944. I shall give reasons as to why it is not possible to give complete effect to the recommendations of the Floud Commission's report in the next financial year. My honourable friend——

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: On a point of explanation, Sir. I mean—giving effect not to the recommendations of the Commission but giving effect to the decisions that the Government may arrive at on those recommendations.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, my friend is a great logician and he will understand that if the decisions of Government are based on the recommendations of the Commission, that is to say, that if the Government accept the recommendations, then the second and operative part of the resolution comes into play, namely, that the decisions must be given effect to in the next financial year. The Leader of the Opposition in the course of his illuminating speech in which he has referred to comparative charts and tables has made it quite clear that it is not possible for anybody—and certainly the framers of the recommendations too did not expect that—to expect that these recommendations should be carried into execution in the course of one financial year. I have been asked as to why I have not been able, on behalf of Government, to come to a decision in this matter. May I, Sir, in this connection give certain facts? The Land Revenue Commission was appointed on 5th November, 1938: the first meeting was attended by my honourable predecessor in office on 19th November. Then it was necessary for the Government of the day to scrutinize the recommendations of the Commission—these recommendations could not by the very nature of their gigantic character be of an unanimous character. Then, Sir, it was thought necessary to appoint a Special Officer to examine these recommendations: that officer was appointed in 1941. In July, 1941, there was a debate but the Government of the day could decide nothing. They wanted to listen to the debate and come to a final conclusion.

Now, Sir, the land revenue system which is attempted to be remodelled is as old as a century and a half and it may be remembered that it is being remodelled after a period of a century and a half: to come to a decision on this very important and complicated matter a little delay is sometimes inevitable—delays are not always dangerous: raw haste is on the other hand half sister to delay. Then, Sir, there was a change in the composition of the Government. We came to office in December, 1941, and it was not possible at the next budget session of the Legislature to come to a definite conclusion on this matter. I may mention here that I had not the privilege and good fortune of serving on the Land Revenue Commission as the honourable Leader of the Opposition was and we all know how very difficult it is to give effect to its recommendations without very careful examination.

Then, Sir, the honour Leader of the Opposition has referred this afternoon to the conference of the leaders of different sections of the House which was to be held, to come to a final decision as to how far the recommendations of the Commission could be accepted. But the honourable members know very well that we are passing through very difficult times. On the last occasion, not by an illuminating speech or by an advertisement but by way of justification I informed the House of my own position—the additional burden which has been imposed upon the Revenue Minister of the province. With the declaration of war with Japan on the 8th December,

1941, we had to deal with various administrative questions of extreme difficulty and complexity. On the one hand, I was called upon to pay compensation of huge amounts to many persons who had to be evacuated on the ground of overriding military necessities. On the other hand, I was asked to provide accommodation to a large number of evacuees who had to vacate their houses in Calcutta and neighbourhood. In addition to this I had to tackle the most agonising situation at Midnapore and the 24-Parganas.

I now come to the amendment of my honourable friend Mr. Nur Ahmed. His amendment is composed of two parts. The first part is that this Council is of opinion that the Government should without delay take decision on the recommendations of the Floud Commission in general and give effect to the decisions, and in the second part he says "in particular to the recommendations numbered 17 to 30, 34 to 50 and 53 of the main conclusions and recommendations as contained in pages 176 and 182 of the report of the Land Revenue Commission, Bengal". My friend Mr. Nur Ahmed visualises how difficult it is to give effect to the recommendations in an abnormal situation like this and in his amendments he referred separately, first of all, the recommendations gnerally and secondly the recommendations 17 to 30, 34 to 50 and 53 on pages 176 to 182 of the report.

With regard to the various points raised by my honourable friend, I may say, Sir, that so far as I am concerned as the Revenue Minister of this province, I am primarily responsible for giving effect to the recommendation of the Floud Commission as contained in items 17 to 22, 25 to 30 and 40 only. If I were to read out the various items for the purpose of focussing the attention of the House, then I shall say that I am interested in recommendation Nos. 17 to 22, that is to say 17, says, "the pressure of population on the land and the large proportion of cultivators who do not possess an economic holding are the chief reasons of the poor condition of the agricultural classes. In view of the difficulty of extending to any appreciable extent the area available for cultivation, it is of primary importance to increase the total agricultural output, especially the yield of the main crop—rice." Second part of this recommendation does not come within the purview of my portfolio. The Commission has recommended: "This should be done by intensive propaganda on the part of the Agricultural Department, and extended use of improved seeds and fertilisers". I think with this recommendation no one can possibly have any quarrel, especially in these days of shortage of necessaries of life including foodstuffs.

Then, I have to deal with item No. 18. "The possibility of extending the cultivation of valuable crops such as betel, sugarcane, tobacco, condiments and vegetables should be examined. More attention should be paid to the cultivation of orchards and bamboo groves."

This again is a question which does not appertain to the department of which I am at present in charge.

Next recommendation is No. 19, which states: "The twice-cropped area could be considerably increased if the cultivators were encouraged to irrigate their lands from rivers, *bils*, tanks or wells. Small irrigation schemes are strongly recommended. Experiments should be made with cheap portable pumps." This, again, is a matter for the Department of Agriculture. The Commission suggests in the second paragraph of recommendation No. 19 "the methods of cultivating *rabi* crops are capable of great improvement".

Then comes recommendation No. 20. "The cultivation of napier grass and other fodder crops should be encouraged and extended." These are valuable suggestions made by the Commission and they will naturally find acceptance with the newly-created Department of Agriculture.

Recommendation No. 21.—"In order to improve the breed of cattle and the milk supply, the supply of stud bulls should be extended. The veterinary staff should be given a thorough training in animal husbandry. The grouping of stud bulls requires careful attention in order to ensure the success of a cattle improvement scheme." Sir, cattle-breeding scheme does not belong fortunately to the Revenue Department but it is a scheme which should certainly attract the most direct attention of my honourable friend who is the Minister in charge of the Department of Agriculture.

Recommendation No. 22.—"The improvement of poultry farming and the possibility of developing subsidiary industries based on milk such as the production of *ghee* and *chhana*, require examination." This is also a matter for the Agriculture Department.

Recommendation No. 25 ostensibly relates to the Agricultural Department. It says, "The budget provision of the Agricultural Department should gradually be increased, and the training of additional staff should be taken up as early as possible."

Recommendation No. 26 says, "The establishment of union farms should be extended and crops grown on the tenants' land under the supervision of the Agriculture Department."

Recommendation No. 27.—"In order to provide continuous employment in rural areas, and to relieve the pressure of population on the land, the development of factories in rural areas and cottage industries offers the best possibilities." These are all matters for the Department of Agriculture and not for the Revenue Department of the Government.

The next item is recommendation No. 28 which deals with silk and lac industries, which also, I think, belongs to the Agriculture and Industries Department.

Recommendation No. 29.—It says, "The development of cottage industries is of primary importance: paddy husking which is fast disappearing from many of the villages should be revived. Government should consider the desirability of restricting by legislation the establishment of rice mills".

I submit, Sir, it does not belong to the Revenue Department.

Recommendation No. 30 says, "It is desirable to keep in touch with industrial developments in other provinces and to send an officer to examine developments which have taken place or are under the contemplation of other Provincial Governments".

Sir, this again is a matter which does not belong to the Revenue Department. My honourable friend's last suggestion is to take into consideration the recommendation made in paragraph 40 and this is a matter which belongs to the Revenue Department. It is to the following effect: "Development of marketing on the lines adopted in the Madras Government is recommended." Then, Sir, we come to a number of suggestions made by the Land Revenue Commission. The main suggestion is one which has engaged my attention and the suggestion is State acquisition of all zamindaries and rent-receiving interests at the lowest rate of cash-paying under-*raiyats*. Sir, I am glad that my honourable friend the Leader of the Opposition, and my honourable friend Mr. Nur Ahmed have both recognised the difficulties of carrying into execution the main policy recommended by the majority of the Floud Commission. I am bad in mathematics and my mathematical accuracy bears no comparison with the mathematical accuracy of honourable the Leader of the Opposition in giving certain figures, but the financial implication of the entire system is very great according to the recommendation of the Commission. I find that my honourable friend in his note of dissent has not agreed with the majority of the Commission on that particular point. If compensation is paid at 10 times the net profit the estimated surplus is 2·23 crores. At 12 times the net profit, the estimated surplus is 1·47 crores and at 15 times it is Rs. 33 lakhs. I have had figures of our Special Officer and I have read that the acquisition of all rent-receiving assets will require a capital sum of Rs. 85 lakhs. I am not here interested in the criticism of our Special Officer with regard to the main recommendations of the Floud Commission, but the criticism seems to have been read by honourable members with deep interest. Sir, we made departmental enquiry, and I say again that I am not sure about arithmetical figures and according to the departmental calculation the loss amounts to a total of Rs. 2 crores and 83 lakhs so that the net gain estimated by majority of the Commission has been reduced to a gross figure of Rs. 60 lakhs. Sir, if the recommendations of the Floud Commission are accepted and if State acquisition is determined upon, then it cannot be made on the basis of expropriation. That is certainly not the intention of the majority of the members of the Floud Commission and under section 299 of the Government of India the compensation has to be full compensation. A very complex legal question has arisen in this connection. Is compensation referred to under section 299 of the Government of India Act—a compensation allowed by the Legislature on the doctrine of legislating retrospectively validating all acts or is it a compensation which must be adequate in character, and in this respect two constitutional difficulties have arisen? In this matter His Excellency the Governor of Bengal may refer the matter to His Excellency the Governor-General under Article 17C of the Instrument of Instructions, and if he does not agree with the view of the Legislature, further reference may have to be made. The third difficulty with which I

was confronted when I took over charge of the department was that the very fundamental basis on which the Floud Commission built up its figures about the payment of compensation rested upon paragraph 33 of the report at page 179, a paragraph which my honourable friend Mr. Nur Ahmed has included within the scope of his amendment. Paragraph 33 is, Sir, to the following effect: "Revisional settlement operations are desirable in permanently-settled estates, no less than in khas mahals and temporarily-settled estates. The period of such settlements should be 30 years, according to the majority".

Then, Sir, the very fundamental basis, as I told you, of the recommendations is that there must be completed record-of-rights with regard to the various estates in Bengal. I need hardly say that up-to-date completed record-of-rights do not exist for the province as a whole. We are hoping to have completed record-of-rights within a short time only in respect of the district of Faridpur. When I was called upon to discharge the very important obligation of acquisition of lands and buildings, evacuation of lands and buildings, and of commandeering lands and buildings, I had to pay compensation and most of the settlement operations had to be stopped notwithstanding my voice of protest due to the exigencies of the war situation. These factors must be borne in mind. I have not mentioned—although it is a fact nonetheless,—that the fact stares us in the face that the acceptance of the recommendations of the Floud Commission will certainly involve a change in the economic structure of the province. Therefore, before a decision is arrived at on these recommendations it is for consideration whether it will not be desirable, in view of the great difficulty presented by the problem—the honourable the Leader of the Opposition has very great revenue experience—and advisable for the leaders of the different parties in this House to meet and give any advice about the practicability of carrying out all or some of the recommendations of the Floud Commission in view of the altered situation with which this province is faced today. I am fully aware of the fact that it is an urgent demand on the part of agriculture and the population which lives on agriculture that some change in the land system of the province is absolutely essential. I am fully aware, Sir, the land system in this province is supposed to be too wooden, too antiquated and too ante-deluvian, but the question is one of practicability. My honourable friend has made three important suggestions. He has first of all suggested the question of the reduction of rent under section 112 of the Bengal Tenancy Act. In the other House—to which, Mr. President, I cannot make any reference, as parliamentary conventions will rule that out—in the other House, Mr. President, the Government has accepted a Committee to enquire into this question of the reduction of land. That question, as every one will agree, is fraught with difficulties and the difficulties grow from month to month. We have in front of us the biggest war of modern times, and what the economic organisation of the world-estates will be after the war is over, no one can foretell. We have therefore to proceed on the present basis. Secondly, my honourable friend has referred to the imposition of an agricultural income-tax. That is a matter for the whole

Government to decide and not for me alone. Thirdly, my honourable friend has referred to the question of adopting a certain procedure for the purpose of carrying out some of the suggestions of the majority of the members of the Commission, but these are exactly the points that are now under deliberation and consideration in my department and I shall give my decision within the next few days. But in arriving at that decision I must have the co-operation of all sections of the House. My honourable friend the Leader of the Opposition, Sir, rightly said that in an abnormal time like this if the economic structure has to be altered that alteration is to be made with the willing co-operation of all sections of the community as far as possible. With this view I am in entire agreement. I hope that after these observations of mine my honourable friend the Leader of the Opposition will not press his motion to a division. I shall give my decision and announce my decision within the next few days. But before I give my decision I shall have to be fortified with a decision which will be as far as possible agreed to by all sections of the House and for that purpose I am inviting the co-operation of the leaders of the different parties if they will discuss this all-important matter in a conference I shall be prepared to meet any day, either tomorrow or day after tomorrow.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: May I know when will it take place and if you are going to issue formal invitation to the conference?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Any day, tomorrow or day after tomorrow. Yes, formal letter of invitation will certainly be issued to you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, order. Mr. Banerjee you should address the honourable member through the Chair.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Sir, through you I would inform the Hon'ble Minister that I shall be away for a few days from Calcutta. If a conference is in contemplation of the Hon'ble Minister it may be held after a week.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I am sorry, Sir, on the 15th March, 1943, this point would be raised elsewhere and before that I propose to discuss this matter in a conference. My honourable friend being a signatory to the majority report his advice will be of the utmost help. So I would request my honourable friend through you if he would be good enough to stay his departure for a couple of days' time I shall feel ever so grateful.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: I am sorry, Sir, that will not be possible. I shall meet the Hon'ble Minister later on. I do not thing everything will be finally decided on the 15th about the recommendations of the Commission.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: My friend is under a misapprehension. If you just allow me to say—on the 15th of

March next the Land Revenue Commission's recommendations are bound to be discussed in the course of the cut motions. So I shall have to confer with the leaders of different groups before that date. I would therefore request my honourable friend through you to be good enough to come to that conference.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Khan Bahadur's suggestion is that you may have your conference; but you may meet him later and take his suggestions.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: For the purpose of replying to the cut motion the Hon'ble Minister is going to meet some of the members and it is quite a different thing. If you want to have a conference of the nature decided upon that could be held later on. My idea of such a conference is that it would consist of leaders of the different sections of the House and some revenue experts—that is a sort of conference which we contemplate, to find out how far the recommendations could be given effect to and so on, but not a conference for the purpose of a suitable reply to the cut motion.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, I was not taking advantage of the conference to enable me to answer the cut motion in the other place. That is not my purpose. I want to do something what can be done under the circumstances. The advice of my honourable friend, the Leader of the Opposition, might be useful towards the solution of the land revenue system. I accept the responsibility for the Government with regard to the decision we arrive at at that conference. I do not propose to embarrass him in any manner or in his constitutional rights and privileges Those constitutional rights and privileges would certainly belong to him. I shall not even mention the fact that I had this conference with him.

Next, with regard to the reason why it was not possible for the conference to meet in July, I hope my honourable friend will remember that in July last, I was confronted with a tremendous problem, problem regarding the evacuees, regarding their compensation and other things. I had been to his part of the province and that was a problem which took me some time to solve.

Then came the unfortunate political movements on and from the 8th August, 1942. I was for ever willing and anxious to summon the conference but the reason why I could not do so was due to circumstances over which I had no control. All the same, I offer my apology for my inability to meet the leaders of the different parties of the House.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Mr. Latafat Hossain, do you propose to exercise your right of reply?

Mr. LATAFAT HOSSAIN: No, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The question before the House is: that this Council is of opinion that the Government should without delay take decision on the recommendations of the Floud Commission and give effect to the decisions within the next financial year.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, I would appeal to my honourable friend not to press his motion.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Are we to understand, Sir, that the conference which had been postponed would be convened this year?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I have already given assurance that the conference shall meet this year.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I shall now put the two amendments of Mr. Nur Ahmed which run as follows:—

(1) That in resolution No. 2 by Mr. Latafat Hossain, after the words "Floud Commission" occurring in line 2, the words "in general" be inserted, and

(2) That in resolution No. 2 by Mr. Latafat Hossain for the words "to the decisions" occurring in line 3, the words "in particular to the recommendations numbered 17 to 30, 34 to 50 and 53 of the main conclusions and recommendations as contained in pages 176 to 182 of the report of the Land Revenue Commission, Bengal, Volume I", be substituted.

The question before the House is: that the two amendments moved by Mr. Nur Ahmed be made.

The motion was put and lost.

Mr. LATAFAT HOSSAIN: Sir, I beg leave of the House to withdraw my resolution.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Is it the pleasure of the House to permit Mr. Latafat Hossain to withdraw his resolution?

(The resolution was by leave of the House withdrawn.)

Begum HAMIDA MOMIN: Sir, the resolution tabled in my name reads as follows:—

That this Council is of opinion that the Government of Bengal be strongly urged upon to encourage the progress of education amongst the Muslim girls in Bengal by creating in addition to the present number of scholarships and stipends reserved for them, an additional number of scholarships, as recommended in Chapter VIII of the Report of the Muslim Education Advisory Committee of 1934.

Sir, there is nothing new in this resolution. It is more or less a reminder and a reiteration of a claim to which Government has not paid sufficient attention so far. The general condition of education amongst Mussalmans is so backward that it has engaged the attention of almost all the Educational Commissions that have been held in Bengal, and, Sir, almost everyone has made the same remark more or less to the effect that to place the Muslim community of Bengal in a sound educational position special facilities should be given. Sir, if you permit me I shall read out one or two passages from these reports:

"The Indian Education Commission of 1882 recommended that a graduated chain of scholarships, leading from the primary school through all intermediate stages up to the B.A. degree and also a system of free-studentships in schools under public management, should be established for the exclusive benefit of the Mussalmans. The Hornell Committee of 1914 also emphasised the necessity for providing more scholarships and free-studentships of Muslim pupils. Finally, the Auxiliary Committee of the Indian Statutory Commission observed: 'We are aware that steps have already been taken to encourage Muhammadan pupils by the reservation of school places, by the award of stipends and scholarships, and by the provision of facilities for the training of Muhammadan teachers. But we are convinced by the evidence placed before us that much more assistance in these directions is needed to place the Muhammadan community in Bengal in a sound educational position. In particular, the number of stipends and scholarships is small compared with the total number of Muhammadan pupils, the majority of whom come from very poor families.....'."

"The Hartog Committee remarked on the inadequacy of the number of stipends and scholarships reserved for Muslim pupils. It appears from the report of the said Committee that the provision of scholarships and stipends and fee remission for Muslim pupils is much more liberal in Bombay and Sind than in Bengal where Muslims form 54·8 per cent. of the total population."

Then, Sir, if we look into the Annual Report of the Director of Public Instruction of Bengal for the year 1939-40, we find that 429,064 Muslim girls were reading in all classes of recognised institutions. Of these 524 were in the high stage, 1,050 in the middle stage, 421,420 in the primary stage and 5,962 in the special schools. Sir, calculating the percentage of Muslim girls in the higher stage with that in the primary stage is negligible. It is evident from the above figures that the big drop between the primary stage and the middle and high stage is not due to the apathy of parents to educate their daughters but it is due to acute pecuniary difficulties. The majority of girls come from homes where hardly anything is left from the months' income after meeting the cost of living and the education of the boys which has to be done at any cost. In such circumstances it is impossible to find money to educate the daughters also. Hence this wide gulf between the primary stage and the higher stage of education of Muslim girls. After examining these conditions and the report of the various Educational Commissions the Muslim Advisory Committee was of opinion that the existing special scholarships and stipends were not only inadequate in number but in most cases were insufficient in value to enable the poor Muslim students to continue their education without pecuniary embarrassment. This Committee therefore recommended special scholarships and stipends to be awarded to Muslim girls in all stages of their education including college education. The details of this will be found in Chapter VIII of the report, and if you will permit me, Sir, I would like to read the recommendations before the House.

Senior scholarships for boys.—This Committee recommended 50 of Rs. 20 a month, each tenable for two years, to be awarded to Muhammadan students, as against the existing 25 of Rs. 10 a month for Arts and B.Sc. colleges. Four of Rs. 16 a month, each tenable for two years, should be awarded to students passing the I.A. and I.Sc. examinations from the Islamia College, Calcutta. The above, however, is for boys. For Muslim girls the Committee recommended that either three new scholarships of Rs. 20 a month, each tenable for two years, should be created, or three out of the existing 13 scholarships of Rs. 20 a month awarded to girls should be reserved for Muslim girls.

In the case of junior scholarships the Committee recommends that ten of Rs. 20 a month, each tenable for two years, should be awarded to Muhammadan girls and would be awarded by the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Dacca. Two scholarships of Rs. 16 a month, each tenable for two years, should be awarded to Muhammadan girls as against the existing one of Rs. 10 a month. On the results of the School Final Examination the Committee recommends in respect of middle vernacular scholarships for girls in East Bengal, ten scholarships of Rs. 5 a month, each tenable for two years, to be awarded to Muhammadan girls as against the existing four of Rs. 4 a month. In Western Bengal, eight of Rs. 5 a month, each tenable for two years, to be awarded to Muhammadan girls as against the existing three of Rs. 4 a month.

In respect of middle English scholarships for girls in East Bengal, the Committee recommend 20 scholarships of Rs. 5 a month, each tenable for four years, to be awarded to Muhammadan girls as against the existing two of Rs. 5 a month. And for West Bengal, ten of Rs. 5 a month, each tenable for four years, to be awarded to Muhammadan girls as against the existing two of Rs. 5 a month.

In respect of junior madrassah scholarships for girls the Committee recommend ten scholarships of Rs. 5 a month, each tenable for four years, should be awarded to Muslim girls on the results of the junior madrassah examination.

In respect of primary final scholarships for girls in Eastern Bengal, 100 scholarships of Rs. 4 a month, each tenable for two years, should be awarded to Muhammadan girls as against the existing six of Rs. 3 a month. For West Bengal, 40 of Rs. 4 a month, each tenable for two years, to be awarded to Muhammadan girls as against the existing two of Rs. 3 a month. In respect of primary preliminary scholarships for girls in Eastern Bengal, the Committee recommend 150 of Rs. 3 a month, each tenable for two years, to be awarded to Muhammadan girls as against the existing nine of Rs. 2 a month. In West Bengal, 50 of Rs. 3 a month, each tenable for two years, to be awarded to Muhammadan girls, as against the existing four of Rs. 2 a month.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: May I ask a question, Sir? May I know what is the total cost of the grants for these scholarships mentioned by the honourable speaker?

Begum HAMIDA MOMIN: Of the scholarships mentioned in the report? I have not calculated that: I am sorry.

Mr. NUR AHMED: It will be about Rs. 20,000 a year as far as I have been able to calculate.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Thank you.

Begum HAMIDA MOMIN: Since then a few scholarships and stipends have been awarded to the Muslim girls, but these are, Sir, nowhere near the number recommended by the Committee. If I remember aright in the Sakwat Memorial School the number of students is over 400. But there are only four scholarships in the higher stage: in the middle six and about eight or ten scholarships in the primary stage. I consider this very inadequate. This school is solely for Muslim girls and its number of scholarships is very small. With these words I would urge the House to consider this resolution sympathetically and accept it. For unless and until we are educationally fit in all sections of the population we cannot make any real advancement in any direction.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Resolution (of Begum Hamida Momin) moved: that this Council is of opinion that the Government of Bengal be strongly urged upon to encourage the progress of education amongst the Muslim girls in Bengal by creating in addition to the present number of scholarships and stipends reserved for them, an additional number of scholarships, as recommended in Chapter VIII of the Report of the Muslim Education Advisory Committee of 1934.

Mr. Nur Ahmed, you may move your amendment at this stage.

Mr. NUR AHMED: I beg to move that in resolution No. 3 by Begum Hamida Momin, for the words and figures "scholarships, as recommended in Chapter VIII of the Report of the Muslim Education Advisory Committee of 1934," occurring in lines 4 to 6 the words "scholarships and stipends to the annual value of Rs. 2 lakhs for Muslim girls studying in various educational, technical, professional and other cultural institutions in Bengal" be substituted.

Sir, by my amendment I want to omit the words "an additional number of scholarships, as recommended in Chapter VIII of the Report of the Muslim Education Advisory Committee of 1934" and in their place I want to substitute the words "scholarships and stipends to the annual value of Rs. 2 lakhs for Muslim girls studying in various educational, technical, professional and other cultural institutions in Bengal". The dismal picture of the present state of Muslim girls' education in Bengal has been correctly given by the mover of the resolution and I cannot describe it better. I am not moving this amendment in any communal spirit but it is an admitted fact that in the matter of education women folks are lagging behind and Bengal cannot progress until her women are properly educated.

Sir, it is an admitted fact that Muslim women's education is lagging behind. From the census report of 1931, it appears that the number of literate Muslim women was only 188,793 out of a Muslim population of

27,497,624 and the number of non-Muslim literate women was 437,799. I am conscious of the fact that education, according to the census report of 1941, has made a progress; the number of educated people has been increased from 47 lakhs to 97 lakhs, that means more than doubled. On the basis of the present census report, which was of course a provisional report, because final report was not available at that time, the number of literate Muslim women would be about 3 lakhs or more. Sir, the Muslim population has increased to 350 lakhs and out of this if we take half of that proportion to be Muslim women we get 175 lakhs and out of which only some 3 lakhs Muslim women are literate. That is the present state of education among the Muslim women folk. In reply to a question in this House, Government gave the percentage of Muslim women education as was in the year 1942:—in primary stage in 1942, 55·5; middle stage 14 per cent. as against 86 per cent. of Hindu women in the middle stage; higher stage 8·9 per cent. as against 91·9 of the Hindu women; college stage 6·3 per cent. against 93·7 per cent. of the Hindu women; post-graduate classes 4 per cent. against 96 per cent. of Hindus; professional schools 12·4; professional college 1·9; technical institutions 10·3 from primary stage to middle stage, the percentage drops from 55·5 to 14 per cent. only.

This is the latest state of education of Muslim women in Bengal. This, Sir, discloses a very lamentable and dismal stage of things. Now, let me compare these figures with the latest figures of Muslim girls' education in other provinces. It appears that in 1940-41 in Bengal out of the 2,356 girls reading in colleges, only 135 were Muslims. Out of 77 girls reading in professional colleges only 2 were Muslims as against 34 in the Punjab and 984 Muslim girls were reading in higher stage in Bengal against 1,379 in Bombay, 1,122 in the United Provinces, 3,082 in the Punjab. Then the total number of Muslim girl students is about 427,903 of which about 3,000 only were reading in middle, high and college stages, and almost 4 lakhs and some thousands are reading in primary schools. This is the exact position in Bengal. Sir, our Minister in charge of Education may come out with a statement showing that education of Muslim girls is advancing very rapidly, but if you take notice of the percentage of their education, you will find that it is not so. It appears from the latest Report that out of 1,000 girls only one received secondary education. Sir, taking on that basis what will be the percentage of Muslim girls in education? Sir, it cannot be more than 1 per cent. Sir, this state of things cannot be tolerated. Therefore, I have proposed this amendment. I have gone through the recommendation of the Momin Committee which was appointed in 1930 and which submitted its report in 1934 when Provincial Autonomy was not inaugurated, and it was at that time that the members of the Committee felt that Government could not accept its recommendation in view of very much pressure from other direction. But since 1934 time has changed, and now it is true that some Muslim women have received higher education and have been offering their services in various public utility organisations. But, Sir, my amendment is a very modest one, and I urge Government for the provision of two lakhs of rupees for Muslim girls just

to make up the lee-way and to expedite the progress of Muslim girls. Sir, it is a lamentable fact that chill, penury and utter distribution are retarding the progress of Muslim education at every stage. Sir, the majority of Muslim girls come from the poorer classes and so they cannot afford to go up for higher education. Take for example medical education. Sir, in medical education Muslim girls are hopelessly lagging behind. Sir, if larger percentage of Muslim population is taken into consideration, no one will deny the dire necessity of Muslim lady practitioners and lady doctors. But medical education is so costly in our country that these poor Muslim girls cannot even think of going up for medical education. We know that the number of Muslim women scholarships is very, very meagre. Owing to this reason there is great difficulty in getting education. They have to go to a particular centre where the cost of living is very high which they cannot afford. There are other technical lines and cultural institutions where Muslim girls cannot get education for want of adequate facilities. The education of Muslim girls is being retarded and they are being compelled to give up this branch of education.

The Educational Auxiliary Committee of the Simon Commission, namely, the Hartog Committee, suggested that the Muslims required special encouragement and for this purpose suggested that for some time special facilities should be given to Muslim girls. They recommended that an allotment of Rs. 47 lakhs a year be made for encouragementt of Muslim education; after that no less a person that the present Premier of Bengal moved a resolution in the old Legislative Council in 1931. In that resolution he asked the House to allot a sum of Rs. 10 lakhs for Muslim education. After that in this very House a similar resolution was carried moved by me but nothing has yet been done for the encouragement of Muhammadan education on a large scale. I know, I am conscious of the fact, that some driblets have been given, some crums have been thrown from the table to the Muslims for Muhammadan education. Two, three or four scholarships and stipends have been awarded and in reply to a question put in this House the Hon'ble Minister for Education replied that out of a total sum of Rs. 7 lakhs and odds expended on scholarships only Rs. 3 lakhs worth of scholarships are reserved for Muhammadan education. Sir, if we analyse these Rs. 3 lakhs we find very little sum is allotted for Muslim girls. I am not making an *abdar*, I am not being unreasonable. I stand for justice. I appeal to the House to consider all the aspects of the case. Unless the Muslims are helped in their path of education and make progress no community will be able to march because one wheel of the chariot will always lag behind and then you too will not be able to advance and your cry for independence and liberation of the country will come to nought. So I appeal to the House to consider the very great necessity for education of the Muhammadan community not for Muslims alone but for the people of Bengal as a whole to help the Muslim girls to advance in education. So that in the end a day will come when we shall not be wanting and we shall not be a burden but on the contrary shall be able to bear that burden and shall be able to take our due place among the free nations of the world.

I again appeal to the House to accept my amendment without any division. This is a very modest demand to which no one can object. With these words I commend my amendment to the acceptance of the House.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Amendment (of Mr. Nur Ahmed) moved: that in resolution No. 3 by Begum Hamida Momin, for the words and figures "scholarships, as recommended in Chapter VIII of the Report of the Muslim Education Advisory Committee of 1934" occurring in lines 4 to 6, the words "scholarships and stipends to the annual value of Rs. 2 lakhs for Muslim girls studying in various educational, technical, professional and other cultural institutions in Bengal" be substituted.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, in the absence of the Hon'ble Education Minister the burden of replying to this motion has devolved on my shoulder. I have forgotten all about my education in the course of the 15 months that I am carrying on in my present capacity.

I shall first of all deal with the amendment of my friend Mr. Nur Ahmed. That amendment is an expression of opinion about a demand and I will not raise the constitutional question involved in the acceptance of his amendment. The question of demand is a question in which the Crown alone is represented as under the Government of India Act, 1935, the Governor of a province is the representative of the Crown for this purpose. The motion, on the other hand, of my honourable friend Begum Hamida Momin does not suffer from that constitutional difficulty. Speaking for myself I have no hesitation in saying, although I have forgotten all about education now, that it is of the paramount importance that the Muslim girls should be properly educated so as to take their proper place with their Hindu sisters. On that point I have no hesitation: and the Government should accept the resolution. I shall convey to the Education Minister the views of the Council so that when time comes for making grants the opinion of this Council with reference to this very important matter may be very carefully considered. The figures given by my friend the mover are quite revealing. In the primary stage the number of Muslim girls was 55·5; in the middle stage the figure dropped to 14; in the college stage there was a further drop to 6 and in the post-graduate stage it is as low as 4 per cent. This is a state of things which should not continue and every effort should be made for the purpose of giving the Muslim girls their proper share of education by State subvention. Beyond that I cannot say anything. This resolution should certainly receive the favourable consideration of the Government. On these grounds I would request the mover to withdraw her motion.

Begum HAMIDA MOMIN: In view of the assurance given by the Hon'ble Minister I beg leave of the House to withdraw my motion.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Is it the pleasure of the House that leave should be granted to Begum Hamida Momin to withdraw her motion?

(There being no objection) the resolution of Begum Hamida Momin was then by leave of the House withdrawn.

Mr. NUR AHMED: Sir, I beg to move that this Council is of opinion that the Government of Bengal be urged upon to adopt all feasible measures to encourage and help the fruit production and fruit preservation industries both in cottages and small factories.

Sir, this is a very simple resolution which urges upon the Government the necessity of encouraging the fruit production and fruit preservation both in cottage and small factory stages. It is vitally necessary for Bengal to adopt this scheme as part of "Growing More Food" campaign, and a start has been made by Government in this "Grow More Food" campaign. This province is suffering from want of adequate food-supply. There was a time when the people were fruit-eaters and there were then no meat or vegetable-eaters. After some time people forgot about fruits, but scientific researches have proved to the world how it is necessary to take fruit to meet the deficits in vitamin products and food properties. In Bengal there has been no comprehensive scheme for the production and preservation of fruit. We find that there are ample fruits in the markets. Sometimes they are wasted and sometimes they are preserved in the old primitive chemical way such as by preparing *achar, chatney, arak, amsuttya*, etc., but the scientific process of preserving fruits is still unknown in Bengal except perhaps in a few gardens. But there is great potentialities of fruit production and fruit preservation in Bengal. Bengal is rich in her fruit production such as banana, mango and other fruits. Sometimes they grow in the mountains and hilly jungles of Bengal and many of them are wasted because sometimes they are out of the human reach. No attempts have so far been made for their preservation. There are some traditions and old methods of fruit-growing but the cultivators being ignorant, as they mostly are, cannot get the benefit of those instructions because those instructions could not be found in any book form. There are climatic conditions and other things. Some very meagre attempt has been made to make any research in this respect. But nothing has been done on a large scale in Bengal.

Sir, in this respect the Punjab stands foremost again. They have got co-operative societies to look after the problem of fruit-growing and fruit preservation. But in the Administration Report of the Agriculture Department and Co-operative Department I find that there is no such co-operative societies for the growing and preservation of fruits in Bengal. In the Punjab, there are hundreds of societies encouraged by Government for preservation and production of fruits, and large sums of money are placed at the disposal of these societies to finance their different schemes with regard to fruit preservation and fruit-growing, and this scheme is a great success in the Punjab. Next comes Bombay and then Madras where there are such arrangements for fruit preservation and fruit-growing, what is the place of Bengal? Bengal is lagging far behind in this respect also, though it has the largest potentiality for production of various kinds of fruits, only it lacks encouragement and research in this direction. Sir, this is a resolution, I think, on which everybody will be in agreement that there will be no difference of opinion about this. Sir, as our people do not know how to

preserve fruits, they waste them to a large extent. My suggestion in regard to this wastage is that the knowledge of growing and preservation of fruits should be collected and research should be made with regard to climatic condition and soil condition and results of this research and other informations that are gathered should be made available by the Agriculture Department or by the Co-operative Department to the people in general and cultivators in particular.

My next suggestion is with regard to preservation of fruits. Though like European countries there is no such arrangements as cold storage of fruits in our country, yet some sort of arrangements may be made for preserving fruits. Another very important factor in respect of this problem is want of cheap and rapid transport facility. Sir, we are labouring under disadvantages in respect of transport, because the people of this country have no control over the transport system. Sir, in European countries there are arrangements for cheap and rapid transport facility by means of which fruits are very rapidly brought from distant counties where they are grown to large cities such as London and other big cities for marketing and storing. But here in our country there is no such system for bringing fruits from growing centres to large cities like Calcutta for the same purpose. Sir, to get over this transport difficulty, the Government should see that suitable arrangements are provided for transhipment of fruits from one place to another either by rail or by any other way. Sir, I would bring one thing to the notice of the Government, and this is that Bengal has the largest population in India and most of whom are vegetarians, and therefore fruits will be consumed in large quantities here, if they are made available. So, my appeal to the Minister in charge of Agriculture is that he will kindly make every endeavour to see that fruit-growing and fruit preservation is included as one of the most important items in the "Grow More Food" campaign, and that all possible arrangements are made for the preservation of fruits on modern scientific methods. With these words, Sir, I commend my resolution for the acceptance of the House.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Resolution moved: that this Council is of opinion that the Government of Bengal be urged upon to adopt all feasible measures to encourage and help the fruit production and fruit preservation industries both in cottages and small factories in Bengal.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Mr. President, Sir——

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, order. I have not yet called upon you to speak. I must first of all find out if there is any other speaker.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: All right, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: It seems that no other honourable member wishes to participate in the discussion. So I must call upon the Hon'ble Minister in charge to reply to the motion.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Thank you, Sir. Sir, I take my stand not to oppose this motion which is quite welcome to me as well as to the Government, but before I deal with the particular point raised by my honourable friend while moving his motion I shall place before the House the steps and measures taken by Government as yet for the production and preservation of fruits in Bengal. Sir, the question of fruit culture was taken up in this province in a systematic way in the year 1934 when a fruit research station was started at Krishnagar with the financial assistance rendered by the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research. Work on varietal trials, propaganda, experiments, manurial trials and collection of varieties on various fruits such as mangoes, *lichis*, *papyas*, *citrus*, guavas, pine-apples, bananas and tomatoes, has been done in this centre, all these years. The results so far achieved have been successful but the Imperial Council having discontinued their contribution towards the station from March, 1942, it is now being continued out of the provincial revenues. The research station at Krishnagar is, however, considered inadequate for meeting the needs of the province and an enlarged scheme for fruit research has been drawn up in which it is contemplated to expand the scope of research at Krishnagar and to establish a new fruit research station at Dacca. In spite of the more urgent calls on the provincial revenues for Civil Defence and other connected matters, which have necessitated the suspension of any important schemes, steps have been taken to go ahead with the Dacca scheme so as to accelerate the work of research in this direction and also to cater for the training of the students of the Bengal Agricultural Institute there.

As regards fruit preservation industry, it may be noted that the question of supply of fruits and vegetables required for canning and preservation in India was thoroughly examined by the Advisory Board of the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research who have made the following suggestions for the scientific study of the situation:—

(1) That in the case of new canneries to be started, they should be advised as to the best places for doing so in the light of the availability of raw materials and proximity to the market; (2) that in the case of existing canneries, especially those which had to meet war order, help must be given, if required, to enable them to obtain the necessary raw materials from the most suitable neighbouring areas; (3) that the canner must clearly undertake to purchase a certain quantity at an agreed price and the agricultural staff should then go round and ensure by propaganda among cultivators that the necessary area is sown in the most suitable tract, as near the cannery as practicable; (4) that the Council should be prepared to consider any application for help that may be needed for the appointment of staff for propaganda.

Although it has not yet been possible by the Agricultural Department to take up any research in regard to fruit preservation at any of the fruit research stations in Bengal, constant touch has been maintained by the departmental officers with the fruit-preserving factories situated in Bengal and all possible help is afforded to them whenever any enquiry is made as

to the availability of a particular fruit or vegetable. Leaflets are also issued by the Marketing Department in the matter of fruit preservation. In this connection it may also be noted that some amount of work is done also at the Basanta Kumar Agricultural Institute, Rajshahi, in this direction.

In order to demonstrate the forms in which fruits and vegetables can be preserved and to attract the attention of the industrial and private concerns to the openings in this direction and give them incentive to take up the work of fruit preservation and canning, a fruit exhibition was arranged in Calcutta in January, 1942, which was opened by His Excellency. In His Excellency's speech on that occasion he dealt extensively with the importance of the question of production, preservation and canning of fruits and vegetables in all its bearing. Thus, Sir, it will be seen that Government are taking all possible steps to encourage fruit production and preservation of fruits. My honourable friend has said that there is no co-operative societies or no attempt has been made by the Government for the preservation of fruits and vegetables. But Government have started work in this direction. At Kalimpong there is a Co-operative Orange Growers Association, because there a large number of oranges grow. This association is working very satisfactorily. But on account of the various obstructions, as mentioned by the honourable mover, for example, for want of transport facilities, wastage in transit, there are certain difficulties and they stand in the way of progress in this direction. There are also supply societies: they are also undertaking this work. As I have already said, since Government took up this work in 1934, they are doing their best in the direction of fruit preservation in this province. But as I have said there are certain obstructions in the way at present for which the desired progress could not be made. Then, Sir, with regard to cottage fruit industry, I am giving my best consideration to the matter and I am discussing this matter with the Chief Marketing Officer as well as the Director of Industries as to which places are suitable for the establishment of such industry. I assure my honourable friend that Government do not spare any pains or hesitate to spend the requisite amount of money for this industry. It is true that Punjab is doing very well with regard to this matter. But the Punjab started this industry at an early stage. This Government also doing this work successfully and I hope it will in the near future attain as much success as the honourable mover desires. With these remarks I would request my honourable friend not to press his motion.

Mr. NUR AHMED: Sir, I am thankful to the Hon'ble Minister for his sympathetic reply; but I do not find anything against his accepting this resolution: he should accept it——

Mr. PRESIDENT: Do you propose to reply?

Mr. NUR AHMED: Yes, Sir. I find that whenever a resolution is moved in this House the reply on the part of the Government is invariably that what is possible is being done. That has been a convention of replying to any resolution, that has been a hanging reply to us given by Government. May I appeal to the Hon'ble Minister not to take resort to that sort of reply

in this case? He has himself admitted in the course of his reply that in the Punjab the fruit industry has become very successful. I think he also desires that to be attained here in Bengal. I appeal to him not to object to the acceptance of this resolution and try to give effect to this resolution in all possible ways.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The question before the House is: that this Council is of opinion that the Government of Bengal be urged upon to adopt all feasible measures to encourage and help the fruit production and fruit preservation industries both in cottages and small factories in Bengal.

(The motion was put and agreed to.)

Mr. PRESIDENT: There are only 5 minutes time left.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Sir, may I move my resolution and finish as much as I can within that time?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: The honourable member can move his resolution on another day.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: In that case there will be fresh ballot of resolutions.

Mr. PRESIDENT: All right, you may move your resolution.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Sir, I beg to move that this Council is of opinion that the Government should encourage spinning by charkha and weaving by the Chittaranjan semi-automatic weaving machine (1) by establishing a demonstration centre in every union of Bengal, (2) by supplying spinning wheels and weaving machines on hire-purchase system to all unemployed or partly unemployed people, and (3) by arranging supply of cotton at concession rates, and with this object in view a sum of Rs. 50 lakhs should be allotted in next year's budget for development of textile industry in Bengal as a home industry.

In moving this resolution, Sir, I need only say that——

Mr. PRESIDENT: May I suggest to you to reserve your speech for the next day? Because I want to adjourn the House now.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: All right, Sir.

Mr. J. B. ROSS: Sir, before you adjourn the House may we have some indication as to the business of the House for the next week?

Mr. PRESIDENT: I propose to inform you about that tomorrow. We are in communication with the Government and we hope to get the information by tomorrow.

I adjourn the House till 2-15 p.m. tomorrow.

Adjournment.

The Council then adjourned till 2-15 p.m. on Friday, the 12th March, 1943.

Members absent.

The following members were absent from the meeting held on the 11th March, 1943:—

(1) Khan Bahadur Naziruddin Ahmad.

(2) Rai Bahadur Keshab Chandra Banerjee.

(3) Mr. Humayun Reza Chowdhury.

(4) Khan Bahadur Rezzaqul Haider Chowdhury.

(5) Mr. Narendra Chandra Datta.

(6) Mr. Kanai Lal Goswami.

(7) The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. Abdul Karim.

(8) Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan.

(9) Rai Bahadur Brojendra Mohan Maitra.

(10) Dr. Radha Kumud Mookerji.

(11) Khan Sahib Abul Quasem.

(12) Khan Bahadur Ataur Rahman.

(13) Mr. Birendra Kishore Roy Chowdhury.

(14) Rai Sahib Jatindra Mohan Sen.

(15) Raja Bhupendra Narayan Sinha Bahadur, of Nashipur.

BGP-4314-1526A-750

BENGAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DEBATES

First Session, 1943—No. 16.

THE COUNCIL met in the Legislative Chamber of the Legislative Building, Calcutta, on Friday, the 12th March, 1943, at 2-15 p.m. being the sixteenth day of the First Session of 1943, pursuant to section 62 (2) (*a*) of the Government of India Act, 1935.

Mr. President (the Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY, K.C.I.E.) was in the Chair.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Sir, as I have been asked to answer the questions of the Nawab Bahadur at the eleventh hour, I am not in a position to do so today. I shall answer them tomorrow.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The House is not sitting tomorrow. It was arranged that some Hon'ble Minister would answer the questions on behalf of the Nawab Bahadur today. But as you are not prepared to answer the questions today, let them stand over till the next meeting.

Vagrants' Homes.

69. Khan Bahadur ATAUR RAHMAN: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be pleased to state what is the gazetted staff and non-gazetted executive and ministerial staff for the Vagrants' Homes?

(*b*) What is the total expenditure incurred for maintaining this staff up till now?

(*c*) What work is actually done by the Controller, Managers and Assistant Managers?

(*d*) Have they rounded up any vagrants?

(*e*) What were the reasons for employing this staff before the homes were ready?

MINISTER in charge of the PUBLIC HEALTH and LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu): (*a*) A statement is laid on the Library Table showing the staff sanctioned for the Vagrants' Homes.

(*b*) The total expenditure up to 28th February, 1943, on staff actually employed is approximately Rs.23,350.

(*c*) and (*e*) Two Managers are in Murshidabad district watching the progress of construction, and the remainder of the staff is engaged in formulating

proposals for the multifarious matters which require to be determined preparatory to the inauguration of any such scheme; e.g., preparing estimates of the scale and cost of provision of food, clothing and equipment, and arranging for their purchase; framing rules of management and discipline, and arranging details of internal administration; also in arranging temporary accommodation in Calcutta for approximately 1,000 beggars pending completion of the Homes at Mahalandi.

(*d*) No.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: With reference to (*c*) and (*e*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is not the duty of the Secretariat to formulate proposals and inaugurate schemes and prepare estimates and everything before a department is actually in working order?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: It is absolutely a new department and new schemes have to be formulated: so the Secretariat has to be strengthened by the recruitment of new men for this special work.

Cases before Debt Settlement Boards.

70. Khan Bahadur SAIYED MOAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture, Co-operative Credit and Rural Indebtedness Department be pleased state—

(*a*) what is the total number of cases so far instituted in the Debt Settlement Boards of Bengal, and the aggregate amount of claims;

(*b*) what is the total number of cases actually amicably settled together with the aggregate amount of claim for such cases and amount for which settlement was made;

(*c*) what is the total number of cases with amounts dismissed for default or irregularities;

(*d*) what is the total number of cases with amounts dismissed on creditors refusing to agree to the settlement;

(*e*) what is the total number of cases with amounts, of which fair offer declared;

(*f*) what is the total number of cases with amounts settled by adjudication on 60 per cent. settlement being made amicably;

(*g*) what is the total number of cases with amounts in which debtors declared insolvent and allowed to retain only one acre of land; and

(*h*) of the total number of cases settled, in how many cases have certificates been applied for as default of payment of *kistis*?

MINISTER in charg of the AGRICULTURE, CO-OPERATIVE CREDIT and RURAL INDEBTEDNESS DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Hashem Ali Khan): A statement is laid on the Table.

Statement referred to in reply to question No. 70.

(a)		(b)			(c)		(d)		(e)		(f)		(g)		(h)
Total number of cases instituted.	Aggregate amount of claims.	Number of cases actually amicably settled.	Amount of claims for such cases.	Amount for which such cases were settled.	Number of cases dismissed for default or irregularities.	Amount of claims in such cases.	Number of cases dismissed on creditors refusing to agree to the settlement.	Amount of claims in such cases.	Number of cases of which fair offer declared.	Amount of claims in such cases.	Number of cases settled by adjudication on 60 per cent. settlement being made amicably.	Amount of claims in such cases.	Number of cases in which debtors declared insolvent and allowed to retain only one acre of land.	Amount of claims in such cases.	Number of certificates filed under section 28(1) of the B. A. D. Act.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.	
3,086,058	64,09,39,305	910,400	28,26,81,838	13,79,94,121	762,243	Not available readily.	Not available readily.	Not available readily.	129,931	2,93,37,117	Not known.	Not known.	90	45,782	110,886

Columns 4, 11 and 15.—The figures represent claims as *determined.*

Columns 7-9.—Such figures are not maintained separately in the Boards.

Columns 12 and 13.—Not known as 60 per cent. amicable settlement is not a condition prescribed in law.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister consider the desirability of having the figures in columns 7, 8 and 9 maintained in the register?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: These figures cannot be maintained in the register under the rules as they now exist. But if the honourable member thinks that it will serve any useful purpose in maintaining them, the rule has to be modified.

Motions under Rule 112 of the Bengal Legislative Council Procedure Rules.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The House will now take up motions under Rule 112 of the Bengal Legislative Council Procedure Rules.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: May I submit that when last we were discussing non-official business the Bengal Agricultural Debtors (Amendment) Bill, 1940, was before the House—

Mr. PRESIDENT: We shall take up the special motions under Rule 112 first and after that we shall go back to the non-official Bills and take up the discussion of the Bengal Agricultural Debtors (Amendment) Bill, 1940.

Mr. NUR AHMED: I beg to move that an address be presented to His Excellency the Governor of Bengal through the Hon'ble the President of the Bengal Legislative Council requesting His Excellency to make a strong representation to the Government of India to place at the disposal of the Government of Bengal at least a lump sum of fifty crores of rupees for improving the conditions of sailors, seamen, soldiers and other non-combatants actively participating in war efforts in Bengal for the rehabilitation of the families, compelled to evacuate from their hearths and home on military grounds.

Sir, this is a resolution which requires serious consideration by this House. In other countries there is agitation and great stirring up and the schemes of post-war reconstruction are being prepared and discussed, *e.g.*, Beveridge post-war reconstruction scheme is being widely discussed now in England: even in Parliament it is being disussed. Similarly in other countries such schemes are being prepared and discussed so that when the war would be over these countries may not be found wanting in this very vital matter of reconstruction.

Sir, this war has dislocated normal life everywhere. It has brought about a revolution in the economic life of every country, every civilized country, countries which are engaged in this great war and countries which are not engaged. Coming nearer home, we find the Punjab is taking step for post-war reconstruction. It has started two funds—one is called "Peasants Welfare Fund" and the other is "Development Fund". The Punjab Government has already approached the Government of India for placing Rs. 200 crores at its disposal for the rehabilitation of the soldiers and other non-combatants who will be demobilized when the war will be over. Bengal in this respect is not doing anything. So, by this motion I bring to the notice of the Ministry and also to the notice of the honourable

members of this House the necessity of having taken up reconstruction scheme. Bengal's contributions in this war, though it might not have sent many soldiers, are much. According to some estimate, Bengal has supplied a large number of seamen, nearly 44,000 and according to others, nearly 50,000. I come from the district of Chittagong which has contributed large number of seamen. In some cases I find that every family has sent one, two and sometimes three sailers or *sarangs* to take part in the war services. Some of the seamen lost their lives while engaged in their most onerous duties and some thousands are reported to have been missing. Some of them are prisoners in foreign land. What will be their position when they will be demobilised? Not only this, thousands and thousands of non-combatants forming part of labour corps have been recruited from Bengal. We find from statistics of the last war that Bengal supplied about 55,000 as non-combatants. I think, though there is no exact figure available now on military grounds, still during this great war Bengal has contributed more than the last war.

Then there are other aspects of this question. Owing to the military emergency a large number of population, according to some, nearly 35 lakhs of persons, had been compelled to leave their hearths and homes and live in temporary accommodation provided by Government in some cases. Some people have been provided in improvised huts and some of them even do not know now how to earn a living in those places. Of course Government has given them a pittance for the removal of their articles and price of these houses but that is nothing. Nearly 35,000 families were removed from Chittagong alone and they are now in a very pitiable condition. Some of those people have gone to their neighbours and some have gone to their relatives' houses. The rest were colonized near some hilly places where. I hear according to some modest estimate, nearly one-third of the people perished because they could not tolerate the climatic ondition of that place. Sir, for this purpose money is required. Now what is the position of the Government of Bengal? The Government of Bengal's financial position is not solvent and Government is in difficulty. Sir, this war is a thing which should be financed by the Government of India. Similar motions have been passed by the Punjab Assembly, and I think there are no two opinions about the necessity of this. My humble suggestion to Government is that they should prepare a skeleton scheme of the post-war reconstruction for the benefit of these seamen, sailors, soldiers and other on-combatants who have taken active parts and are at present taking active parts for the prosecution of the war and also for the rehabilitation of the persons evacuated on military ground. So I propose that Government of India should be approached to place at the disposal of the Government of Bengal at least a lump sum of fifty crores of rupees for improving the conditions of these people and I must say that my estimate is very modest, for the scheme may require more money. Sir, with these few words I commend my motion for the acceptance of the House.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, order. Motion moved: that an address be presented to His Excellency the Governor of Bengal through the Hon'ble the President of the Bengal Legislative Council requesting His Excellency

to make a strong representation to the Government of India to place at the disposal of the Government of Bengal, at least a lump sum of fifty crores of rupees for improving the conditions of sailors, seamen, soldiers and other non-combatants actively participating in war efforts in Bengal and for the rehabilitation of the families, compelled to evacuate from their hearths and homes on military grounds.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Mr. President, Sir, coming as I do from one of the districts which supply a large proportion of the seamen now serving in the vessels plying in most of the dangerous areas, I consider it my duty to lend my whole-hearted support to the resolution moved by my honourable friend, Mr. Nur Ahmed. Sir, it is a well-known fact now, and it cannot be denied by anybody, that these seamen can no longer be called non-combatants in the sense that they are suffering incidentally because of the war. They are practically, Sir, on the front line of the war. Sir, these seamen play by far the most important part in this war because it is they who keep up the life line of the combatant forces operating elsewhere in the front line, and possibly it is by the sacrifices that these seamen are making every day that the war is being fought, the civilians are being fed and most of the country's provisions up till now are being secured. Sir, in almost all countries liberal compensations have been made for their seamen. In fact, so far as our province is concerned, our seamen are not getting anything whatsoever for the sacrifices they make. During the last war, though these seamen remained far away from home, they brought enough money on their return at the end of the war. But in this war though these seamen are dying in hundreds, no provision whatsoever is being made for their dependents except what remains in the shape of their arrear salaries. The difficulties and condition of service that these seamen have to undergo are known only to those who have seen them. The Port Officer is there supposed to be a person who is interested in the welfare of the seamen. But up to now his hands are so full that he often cannot discharge full duties to the seamen. In this resolution a proposal has been made for a grant of Rs. 50 crores which may seem to be very large. But when we consider that no less than 50,000 or 60,000, now going to the outgoing vessels and a large number of these people are perishing in the sea leaving a host of dependents not looked after by any one, I submit that the amount claimed is not at all large. During this war Punjab is getting a huge amount of money for the dependents of the forces: in pension alone they get Rs. 5 to Rs. 10 crores: and the family pension comes to a very large proportion of it. So far as the seamen who are participating in the war efforts are concerned, I think it is the duty of the Government of India to come to the rescue of their dependents—those who have actually lost their lives in the battle which is being fought now on the high sea. So I submit that this House should recommend unanimously to the Government of India with all the emphasis they command that this bare justice should be done to the seamen who mostly come from Bengal.

Mr. KRISHNA CHANDRA ROY CHOWDHURY: Sir, I agree with every word that has fallen from my honourable friend opposite. I was in

touch with the Seamen's Association. As a matter of fact, Mr. Aftab Ali, President of the Indian Seamen's Union, gave me figures that 7,200 *laskars* lost their lives as a result of submarine action and several thousand *laskars* has been made prisoners from the merchant vessels. Altogether 4,200 have either died or have been made prisoners. The Government scale of pension of the *laskars* killed who were employed in merchant vessels is, I believe, Rs. 15 to the widow and a few rupees to the other dependents, and so that is not at all enough. Therefore if a proposal of this nature is sent to the Government of India it will make them think more seriously what kind of provision should be made for the dependents of those who are getting killed or wounded. These seamen are working on the life-line—they are in the warzone: I myself have been to the *laskars* recruiting centre: these men are not at all afraid to take up this job although it is a great risk and hazardous to do so, and I think that the Government of India should seriously consider the desirability of giving suitable pension and compensation to the dependents of these men. I do not know what should be the actual figure and I do not know whether it will cut much ice; but an attempt should be made to get the Government of India to grant increased pension and compensation to these brave men apart from grant of lands to the survivors. With these words I support the motion.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Sir, this special motion raises a very important question in so far as it seeks to bring the Government of India to the assistance of those who have undertaken very great and very hazardous work. The demand for 50 crores of rupees from the Government of India for the purposes mentioned in this motion, if supported by this Council, will certainly be taken into earnest consideration by the Government of India. So far as the question of improving the conditions of sailors, seamen, soldiers and other non-combatants are concerned, the resolution is not very definite as to what improvement in condition is referred to. I do not know whether my honourable friend has taken the trouble of mentioning that in his speech but in so far as a motion of this character which is intended for another Government, it has to be self-contained. Well, I am afraid that the motion as it is worded here on the Order Paper, lacks that virtue, but as regards the latter part of the motion, namely, "for the rehabilitation of the families compelled to evacuate from their hearths and home on military grounds", this is much more definite. The only part that this Government can play in this matter is to forward the proceedings of this House on this motion to His Excellency the Governor, and this will be done by the Hon'ble President, and I think His Excellency would take such action as he considers necessary on the recommendation of this House.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The question before the House is: that an address be presented to His Excellency the Governor of Bengal through the Hon'ble the President of the Bengal Legislative Council requesting His Excellency to make a strong representation to the Government of India to place at the disposal of the Government of Bengal, at least a lump sum of fifty crores of rupees for improving the conditions of sailors, seamen, soldiers

and other non-combatants actively participating in war efforts in Bengal and for the rehabilitation of the families, compelled to evacuate from their hearths and homes on military grounds.

The motion was put and agreed to.

Mr. NUR AHMED: Sir, I beg to move that an address be presented to His Excellency the Governor of Bengal through the Hon'ble the President of the Bengal Legislative Council requesting His Excellency to make a representation to the Government of India to meet from the Central revenues 90 per cent. of the expenditure on civil defence measures, in Bengal.

Sir, from the budget estimates presented to this Council by the Hon'ble the Finance Minister, it appears that Bengal is labouring under a great disadvantage owing to the very extraordinary expenditure under this head. During the years 1941-42, 1942-43 and including the estimated expenditure of 1943-44 it appears that Bengal would spend about Rs. 9,41,03,000 and out of this, Government of India would contribute about Rs. 5,62 lakhs and odd, and the Government of Bengal would have to bear the expenditure under this head up to Rs. 3,18 lakhs. If we take the question of deficit of this province of Bengal along with this figure, it will be found that but for this amount, Bengal would not have been a deficit province this year. If Government of India had borne the full burden or at least 90 per cent. of Bengal's contribution towards war, the expenditure would have been reduced from Rs. 3,18 lakhs to Rs. 94 lakhs only and Bengal could have managed with this sum. Sir, there are strong reasons why Bengal should get at least 90 per cent. of its expenditure on civil defence. Bengal stands on the border of Burma, where the enemy is seeking an opportunity to attack India. Bengal has to prepare its civil defence for the protection of its citizens, fully and adequately, and has to incur largest expenditure under this head.

Sir, it is an admitted fact that Bengal has been very badly treated by the Government of India in the past. Bengal's contribution to India Government is the largest out of her income-tax revenue. But her share is the smallest. Out of approximately 24 crores of income-tax receipts, Bengal gets, according to the latest figure, only about 2 crores and a few lakhs, and the rest amounting to 22 crores is taken away by the Government of India. But that is not all. Jute is practically Bengal's monopoly, and she has been crying for full share out of jute duty for many years past, but she has been given only 62½ per cent. of the entire receipts realised on account of jute duty. Sir, in the year when war was declared Bengal got as its share of jute duty only 2 crores and 21 lakhs. But, now from the latest budget figure it will appear that even that sum of 2 crores and 21 lakhs has been reduced to 1 crore and 25 lakhs in the years 1942-43 and 1943-44. Sir, this is another very cogent reason why Bengal should ask the Government of India to pay more on civil defence measures. Again, Sir, Bengal's share out of licence fees on motor spirit has been considerably reduced, so also proceeds from sale tax, jute tax have been reduced by half. They have fallen far below the expected estimated amount. Sir, this is another cogent

ground why Bengal should ask the Government of India to pay more on account of civil defence expenditure. There is another ground for Bengal's demand for more money. Bengal's population and density of population are the largest and consequently her requirements of greater expenditure on nation-building departments. The Government of India should consider all these aspects of Bengal's prayer for more funds on account of civil defence measures.

I know, Sir, that according to that arrangement the Government of India have divided the expenditure on civil defence under three heads: the first is known as poolable—that is expenditure incurred by the Government of Bengal on all civil defence measures for the protection of the public at large and the Government of India bear full expenditure according to the present arrangement. The second is the non-poolable expenditure which includes expenditure incurred by the Government of Bengal for the protection of their property and their employees. This expenditure has to be fully borne by the Government of Bengal. My humble submission is that it is as necessary to protect the property and employees as the public at large. They are all engaged in running the administration and protecting the people and why should the full expenditure in this respect be borne by the Government of Bengal. There is another fact, that is regarding expenditure on special measure. Under this head local bodies and the Corporation of Calcutta have to be paid one-third of the expenditure. I think, Sir, these are the grounds on which the Government of Bengal can ask the Government of India to pay more. Money is required for all beneficial purposes and my appeal to the members of the House is that they should consider this aspect of the question and accept my motion. I also appeal to the Ministry to make out a strong case and approach the Government of India for a larger sum so that Bengal may have some money for its beneficial services. With these words I commend my motion to the acceptance of the House.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Motion moved: that an address be presented to His Excellency the Governor of Bengal through the Hon'ble President of the Bengal Legislative Council requesting His Excellency to make a representation to the Government of India to meet from the Central revenues 90 per cent. of the expenditure on civil defence measures in Bengal.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Sir, I rise to support the motion moved by my friend Mr. Nur Ahmed whole-heartedly. The honourable mover of the motion has already given details to show to what a precarious financial condition Bengal has fallen owing to the present war. We know there are special disabilities from which Bengal has been suffering and in this connection two chief points arise in our mind: the first is the iniquitous Meston Award on account of which Bengal is suffering to a great extent. Bengal has been much harder hit as compared with other provinces. We find that Bengal is not being able to serve the ratepayers because a large proportion of its revenues is being taken away by the Centre. Bengal's proportion appropriated by the Centre is much larger than that of other provinces.

The other reason is the inelasticity of Bengal's revenues. On this account Bengal's revenue receipt is handicapped. *Raiyats* of Bengal pay Rs. 13 crores as rent out of which only Rs. 3 crores goes to the State coffer. There we lose Rs. 10 crores. Bengal is in a very peculiar position, financially, and owing to these disabilities, it is only meet and proper that we should approach the Government of India and ask them to bear at least 90 per cent. of civil defence, if not the whole amount. In fact the entire amount should be borne by the Government of India, but my friend the mover has put it down to 90 per cent., perhaps only to show that we are willing to co-operate in the war efforts by cntributing towards cost of civil defence. This is a very fair resolution and I hope this resolution would be accepted by every member of this House. Bengal is in a precarious condition on account of the heavy expenditure under the head "Civil Defence". They had not only to stop various nation-building activities, but as a matter of fact, the receipts from the new taxes which had been imposed on the definite understanding of helping the nation-building activities, had to be diverted for civil defence purposes. All the new taxes, sales tax, finance tax and the raw jute tax, all these were meant for nation-building purposes, for helping the agriculturists of Bengal but all the proceeds from the tax had to be diverted to the civil defence expenditure, and yet we are faced with a deficit of 1½ crores. If we properly place all these facts before the Government of India, we are sure, we would get a sympathetic reply, they would certainly come to our help. We should side by side with this remind them about the Meston Award. By that a permanent injustice has been done to us. With these words, Sir, I support the motion.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, in a motion like this, I have very little to say. We all welcome the day when we might get such a substantial help from the Government of India. As usual, we will forward the proceedings of this House on this motion with our strongest recommendation.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The question before the House is: that an address be presented to His Excellency the Governor of Bengal through the Hon'ble the President of the Bengal Legislative Council requesting His Excellency to make a representation to the Government of India to meet from the Central revenues 90 per cent. of the expenditure on civil defence masures in Bengal.

The motion was put and agreed to.

Mr. NUR AHMED: Sir, I beg to move that an address be presented to His Excellency the Governor of Bengal through the Hon'ble the President of the Bengal Legislative Council requesting His Excellency to make an immediate representation to the Government of India to give all reasonable facilities and assistance for the development of the manufacture of salt in Bengal.

Sir, in this matter of the development of manufacture of salt. I think Bengal stands in a peculiar position. There was a time when Bengal was self-sufficient in the matter of manufacture of salt. At the time of the

Moghul Rule and also at the time of the East India Company and also for some time under British Rule, Bengal used to manufacture salt in a large quantity and after meeting its own need it used to export salt to Benares, Allahabad and other provinces of India and even outside India. It will also, Sir, appear from the history of the manufacture of salt that during the time of the East India Company, Bengal had a monopoly of business with the East India Company as regards supplying of salt. The East India Company established agencies through some districts of Bengal, such as Tamluk, Chittagong and 24-Parganas and from an account of 1855 to 1857, we find that through these four agencies salt manufactured amounted to Rs. 34 lakhs.

Sir, it also appears from another account that the duty from manufacture of salt in the Sundarbans and other places amounted to 57 lakhs of rupees in 1870. Sir, with the import of foreign fine salt, Bengal's manufacture of salt industries has become almost extinct. Now, on account of the stoppage of import of salt from foreign countries due to the present war, Bengal's cottage industry for manufacture of salt is again being revived. As a matter of fact, Sir, in Chittagong and other coastal areas a great stir and a great movement for preparing salt is being noticed, and I think but for this movement there would have been a great scarcity of salt in Bengal. Sir, it is high time that these small enterprises of our people should be encouraged and assisted in all possible ways. Sir, it is a known fact that salt is a Central subject. Before the inauguration of the Provincial Autonomy Bengal got some share of duty on salt. That was an extra duty imposed on import of foreign salt by the Central Government. In the year 1935-36 Bengal got about Rs. 96,000 as its share, in 1936-37 she got Rs. 57,000 and in 1937-38 she got a very small amount. Because the special Act was not renewed, Bengal did not get anything. Sir, the Government of Bengal has no share in the duty and are not in a position to encourage her salt industries. Bengal is the only province where salt is imported and Government of India get large sums as salt duty from Bengal. Bengal annually used to import before the war 1 crore 40 thousand maunds of salt, but Bengal's requirement was only 80 lakhs of maunds and the balance used to go to Assam and other places. Sir, Bengal very recently made enquiries into the potentialities and possibilities of the manufacture of salt in Bengal, and the expert opinion is that Bengal can produce up to 50 lakhs of maunds of salt if her salt industries are encouraged and developed properly. Bengal requires expert assistance in this direction. Sir, in Madras, Government appoint Inspectors who inspect the salt factories and give them advice as to how to prepare salt on a scientific basis. Also they get advances from the Government of India for encouragement of this industry. My suggestion is that the Government of India should employ some expert Inspectors for instructing the people who are engaged in the preparation of salt on a very crude basis. The Government of India should also advance a modest sum to the Government of Bengal free of interest to encourage by assisting the big salt factories which have recently been established in Bengal. With these words I commend my motion to the acceptance of the House.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Motion moved: that an address be presented to His Excellency the Governor of Bengal through the Hon'ble the President of the Bengal Legislative Council requesting His Excellency to make an immediate representation to the Government of India to give all reasonable facilities and assistance for the development of the manufacture of salt in Bengal.

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Sir, Government have absolutely no objection to the acceptance of this motion—rather it welcomes such a motion. But I beg to place before the House certain facts and after that I would request the House to consider whether this is the proper occasion for forwarding such a motion to the Government of India.

Sir, the salt industry may be divided into two parts—one is the cottage salt industry and the other is the big factory industry. So far as the production of salt through cottage industry process is concerned, I may inform the House that we have started very recently in the coastal districts of the 24-Parganas and Midnapore this industry. For that purpose it was thought necessary that the Government of India should relax certain salt rules and recently after we made all sorts of arrangements for the starting of this industry we approached the Government of India on this matter. They were very reasonable and considerate in considering this proposal. So there is no difficulty regarding prosperity of this cottage industry so far as the Government of India is concerned. The second part is the big factory industry process of preparing salt. The Government of Bengal has prepared a scheme of salt production in big factories, but it is still under the consideration of experts and of the Industrial Survey Committee. So far as the production of salt by factory process is concerned the Government of Bengal is not yet ready with their scheme so they could not forward the scheme to the Government of India——

Mr. PRESIDENT: Are you opposing the motion?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: No, Sir, I am not opposing it: but my submission to the House is that we have no ground for approaching the Government of India at this stage to come to our assistance, because we are not yet ready with the big industry scheme of producing salt. That is my submission to the House and if the House thinks that an address be sent to the Government of India for their assistance, I will have no objection. But I submit to consider whether it is the proper occasion to do so.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The question before the House is: that an address be presented to His Excellency the Governor of Bengal through the Hon'ble the President of the Bengal Legislative Council requesting His Excellency to make an immediate representation to the Government of India to give all reasonable facilities and assistance for the development of the manufacture of salt in Bengal.

(The motion was put and agreed to.)

Mr. PRESIDENT: The House will now take up non-official Bills.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: On a point of order, Sir, according to rule 56 of the Rules of Procedure, I find that a Select Committee shall consist of not more than 11 members, that is, 11 members is the maximum number that should be fixed for a Select Committee. According to the quotas that have been allotted to the different parties, we find that if the Hon'ble Minister in charge is included then the number comes up to 12. So rule 56 is contravened.

Mr. PRESIDENT: You want to know whether according to the rules maximum number of 11 members should include the Hon'ble Minister in charge or not?

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Yes, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I believe so. There are two calculations: one including the Hon'ble Minister in charge and the other excluding him. When the Hon'ble Minister is a member of this House, the number becomes 11 and when he is not a member of this House, the number is 10.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: We would like to know, Sir, how these 10 seats are to be allocated to the different parties.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I propose to discuss this question with the leaders of different groups after today's meeting or if it is convenient to you on the 22nd March. Because we must decide first of all what should be taken to be the total strength of the House for the purpose of constituting a Select Committee, that is, whether the strength of the House should be taken to be 62 or the number of members that actually exists when a Select Committee is formed. That is the point to be considered. The quota of the different parties will depend on the total strength of the House.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: In the meantime what procedure should we follow now? We have got to move certain motions regarding reference to Select Committees. In the absence of any fixed procedure how are we to give the proportionate representation to each party?

Mr. PRESIDENT: I would suggest that it would be most convenient to all if we could accept the names as they appear in the list today. Because if we try to reconstitute it on the floor of this House it would be very difficult to come to any satisfactory decision. So, I would suggest that, we should accept the names as they are, so far as the present Bills are concerned. Then, on the 22nd March we shall meet and come to a decision and fix the quota once for all.

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: On a point of information, Sir. I want to know whether today is a non-official Bills day or a day for moving motions under rule 112. Three motions have been moved, and they have practically taken the whole day. Previously, the arrangement was that there will be one non-official Friday for moving non-official Bills and another Friday for non-official resolutions and other motions. This is one point. Another point which I want you to make clear is if one day in the week is set apart

for non-official business and that day is a Friday when the House will sit from 2-15 p.m. and not from 1-30 p.m., then how shall we get sufficient time for discussion, we then practically get one hour. Is it so?

Mr. PRESIDENT: I do not think you are correct. On Friday we sit at 2-15 and continue up to 4-15, so we sit for full two hours. As regards the other point raised by you, the motions under section 112 are also non-official businesses and it was agreed to by the House so far as I remember that we should first of all dispose of the motions under section 112 and then take up the undisposed Bills which would be standing over from the previous non-official day.

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: What will be the future procedure? Whether one Friday will be set apart for motions and another Friday for non-official Bills?

Mr. PRESIDENT: That point we shall consider on the 22nd.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, owing to the constitutional flux of the House, may I suggest that if Government gives another day for non-official Bills, could the discussion of this matter be held over till the 22nd? The Hon'ble Chief Minister is prepared to allot a day for non-official Bills.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Mr. Banerjee, it would be most convenient if we could postpone the non-official Bills till the 5th of April. By that day some of the new members will be elected to the House but there are so many Bills on the agenda, so I do not think it will be convenient to postpone the discussions of these Bills. Therefore, let us proceed on the existing basis at present and then when we meet on the 22nd we shall discuss this question and shall try to come to a satisfactory decision, if possible.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: On the 4th I shall move a short-notice motion for amending the personnel of the Select Committee.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Yes, if necessary.

NON-OFFICIAL BILLS.

The Bengal Agricultural Debtors (Amendment) Bill, 1940.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Mr. President, Sir, I submitted on the last occasion that these were very drastic measures and on account of the abnormal condition prevailing in the country such a Bill ought not to be moved. I dealt with clause 4 of the Bill, and I said already that on the submission of a single petition on a piece of paper without any court-fee all proceedings in civil courts including execution cases and suits, either rent suits or money suits, shall be stayed for three years on the ground or on the allegation that the debtor is an agricultural debtor, without any verification or without any authority from any other court or competent authority.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: We shall modify it in the Select Committee.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN:.....And it may be that towards the close of the three years the debtor who if he is a clever man, will file a petition before the Debt Settlement Board, and it will take another two years till the debt is finally settled. So it will take five years for the realisation of rent by a landlord, be he a zemindar or a talukdar. I think this will create chaos, the revenue will suffer and the landlord will not be in a position to pay revenue to the Government; if he cannot realise revenue within five years, he will not be able to pay rent during these five years and as soon as the debt will be settled the landlord will come forward and institute rent suit for three or four years, and the tenants in order to liquidate his debt incur further debts on account of the rent. So if any effect is given to this Bill at all that will adversely affect the tenantry of Bengal and bring about chaos in the whole province.

Then, Sir, as to clause 5 which runs as follows:—

"As soon as a Debt Settlement Board is established in any union, Government shall by a notification in the Gazette call upon all the creditors including landlords, to whom any agricultural debtor owes any money, to submit a complete statement of all agricultural debts or arrear rents due to them within three months of the notification, failing which (except for very cogent reasons) the debts shall be barred by limitation notwithstanding anything in the Indian Limitation Act, and no claim in respect of any amount due from any agriculturist in respect of which, no statement has been filed within time, or which has not been included in the debt statement filed in compliance with the Government notification, shall be entertained in any civil court."

So it will be seen that as soon as Government notifies that a Debt Settlement Board has been established the zemindars and landlords down to the tenureholders and under-tenureholders and other creditors will have to submit, under the provision of this clause, detailed statement showing the names of the *raiyats*, the amount of rent due or the arrears of rents and the names of the debtors as well as date, amount of the principal, interest, etc. He will have to submit this statement within three months from the debt of notification. Now, Sir, I just want you to consider for a moment what will be the situation in the whole province if this provision is given effect to. There are landlords, there are zemindars, tenure-holders, who have got large number of tenants, and will it be possible for these landlords to submit a detailed statement of these large number of tenants showing all the items I have stated, month by month? They have not got sufficient staff to do so as it will be a huge thing. Then, Sir, supposing the creditor is compelled to submit some sort of statement and through oversight anything is excluded that will be time-barred in spite of the Limitation Act. He will have no redress after that. Then comes the question as to what will be the position of the Debt Settlement Boards constituted as they are. In the course of the budget discussion we have heard many serious allegations made by the honourable members of the House against the members

of these Debt Settlement Boards. I have also received petitions and representations against some members of these boards. I do not say that all the members of these boards are dishonest. But there may be some who are tempted to be dishonest. Instances are not wanting in this respect. That is a known fact. These people have got no legal training, neither is it possible for Government to provide these boards with highly educated people. What is actually the position? A clerk on Rs. 10 has to manage a huge volume of settlement of debts that come forward. It will take years and years to follow the procedure suggested by my honourable friend. Practically it would be impossible for these ordinary boards to function if they go minutely into details. It would be impossible, as I have already submitted, for these boards to function properly and fairly if this Bill is accepted or passed by the House. The main reason, as stated in the Statement of Objects and Reasons by the honourable member, is that it is desirable to ensure that all agricultural debts were settled and the existing Act does not permit that. He says that most of debtors do not come up to the Debt Settlement Boards for relief. I cannot say why they should not come. I know, Sir, nearly 40 per cent. of debtors have come to the Debt Settlement Boards for relief——

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Not even 10 per cent.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I know from personal knowledge that it is nearly 40 per cent. But be that as it may, Sir, why debtors should come before the boards if they can profitably and amicably settle their debts by private arrangements and if they get there more facilities? Government cannot force them to come up before the boards. It has been sufficiently propagated throughout the country by the departmental officers asking or requesting the debtors that they should come before the Debt Settlement Boards for the settlement of their debts and we have increased the number of Special Board specially Co-operative Central Bank Boards and ordinary Debt Settlement Boards. Moreover we have recently extended the life of the boards by two years. Every facility is being given to these debtors. If after that, if in spite of these measures taken by Government the debtors do not come before the boards what can we do? I submit, Sir, that cannot be the reason for bringing in a Bill like this by which those debtors would be forced to come up before the Debt Settlement Board and the creditors also or else the creditors would forfeit their money.

Then, I come to clause 7 of the amending Bill. It has been said by the mover "When the creditors and debtors do not agree to any amicable settlement or either of them do not appear in spite of notice, the Board of its own initiation shall settle such amount as payable to each non-agreeing or absentee creditor as it considers fair, but in so doing interest shall in no case be allowed at more than 6¼ per cent. simple interest on the original principal and the aggregate amount settled as payable by the debtor must not be more than 66 per cent. of the market value of the entire immovable

properties owned by the debtor." Under the existing system the Special Boards have got power to settle debts against the will of the parties. But should the boards be vested with this power of awarding decrees in the absence of either the debtor or creditor and "that the amount settled as payable by the debtor must not be more than 66 per cent. of the total claim"? Now if these boards are given this arbitrary power of settling the debts in the absence of the party what would be the consequence? I ask my honourable friend to think over that before he wants Government to enact this sort of Bill. Of course the honourable member is at liberty to say anything he likes in favour of this Bill.

Then next is clause 10 which runs as follows: -

"But ordinarily unless the parties otherwise agree and the Board considers the agreement reasonable or the Board for any special reason thinks it proper to order otherwise, the Board shall instead of ordering cash payment by instalments, order transfer of particular plots of lands belonging to the debtor, in favour of the creditors in complete usufructuary mortgage for a certain number of years (not exceeding 20 years in any case) in full satisfaction of the amount settled as due under clause (*d*), the aggregate area so transferred to all the creditors being in no case more than one-third the area held by the debtor."

Now, Sir, according to my honourable friend's suggestion if the Debt Settlement Board gives such an award to the creditor by which he will take possession of one-third of the total amount of lands of the debtor and enjoy it for 20 years in full satisfaction of the amount settled as due and then return the land to the debtor after 20 years, then the problem is solved. But, Sir, even the ordinary civil courts of our country will hesitate to give a decree such as this, and again taking it for granted that such arbitrary powers are given to these boards, they will very easily exercise these powers unfairly and arbitrarily in favour of this party or that party.

In my opinion, what the Debt Settlement Board is now doing is very fair. The Board only orders cash payment by instalments according to the paying capacity of the debtor after taking into consideration his annual income and expenditure and, if necessary, after holding local enquiries about his surplus after meeting his annual expenditure. Now, if the creditor is allowed to take possession of one-third of the total amount of lands of the debtor, the debtor will have to fall back upon his remaining two-third lands for his subsistence. So, if he, with full possession of his entire lands, could somehow maintain his family, now having been deprived of one-third of his total amount of lands, he will hardly be able to maintain his family. Therefore, he will be constrained to work as an ordinary day labourer for his livelihood. This is not at all desirable. (Moreover, the matter may be still worse, if the debtor has more than one creditor and each of them takes possession of one-third of the total amount of lands.) So all these aspects of the matter should be taken into consideration before considering this Bill.

But, Sir, I beg to submit that I fully agree with my honourable friend that a relief should be given to the debtor by all possible means. As a matter

of fact, I have already issued instructions to the Debt Settlement Boards and also in course of my tours I addressed the people and members and Chairmen of the Debt Settlement Boards in this matter and asked them to give all sorts of relief as far as possible to the debtors even though it might mean hardships to the creditors. But, Sir, if such drastic measures as are suggested by my honourable friend are adopted, there will be a great hue and cry throughout the length and breadth of the country, and instead of giving relief to the debtors, they will be very badly treated by the creditors, the landlords and others. As I have already said, I know that my honourable friend always think of the poor cultivators and wants to give them relief. But the relief should be given in a practical way, not in a theoretical way by passing an Act like this and by taking away the rights which they already possess. With these remarks I oppose the Bill. I hope that the whole House will agree that this is not the time for passing a Bill like this and the provisions of this Bill are not at all suitable for giving relief to the agricultural debtors.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: May I reply, Sir?

Mr. PRESIDENT: You have no right of reply in a Bill.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: I think, Sir, I have got the right of a reply.

Mr. MESBAHUDDIN AHMED: Sir, I want to move a short-notice amendment.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Is there any objection to the moving of a short-notice amendment by Mr. Mesbahuddin Ahmed?

(There was no objection.)

Yes, you may move your amendment.

Mr. MESBAHUDDIN AHMED: I beg to move that the date for the submission of the Select Committee report may be changed from 15th March, 1943, to 30th June, 1943.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The question before the House is——.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: On a point of order, Sir. May I refer you to rule 42(2) which runs as follows:—

"Except in the exercise of a right of reply or as otherwise provided, no member shall speak more than once on any motion". This is a motion for reference to a Select Committee——.

Mr. PRESIDENT: In fact I looked up that reference: if the practice of the House is to give right of reply in case of a Bill I have no objection.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Sir, I have moved more than 20 Bills in this House and my friend Mr. Nur Ahmed also moved Bills in this House and we exercised our right of reply in most cases.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Very well, I allow you to exercise the right of reply; but this should not form a precedent. I propose to examine this point.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Sir, I am grateful to my esteemed friend for the detailed reply he has given in replying to my motion for reference of this Bill to a Select Committee. But, Sir, I must confess I was not at all convinced by it. Sir, he has examined the provisions of the Bill in detail. He has said that some of the provisions are impracticable and so they cannot be accepted. I think, Sir, if the principle of the Bill is accepted the provisions of the Bill could be modified in the Select Committee. We may put our heads together and find out what modifications are necessary for giving a practical shape to the principles of the Bill.

There are three main provisions in the Bill. First of all, instead of waiting indefinitely for debtors or creditors to come up we should compel them to come up and settle their debts. This is in keeping with the practice of the Court of Wards' estates. Government calls upon individuals or parties to submit their statement of debts, in regard to the estate which is taken over by the Court of Wards, within a certain period after which no claim is entertained. So, if you really want to clear off the debts of the poor agriculturists, who are illiterate in 99 cases out of 100 and whom you cannot expect to come up before the boards unless they are brought to bay, you must compel them to come up before the boards. It has been stated today in reply to a question of mine that the total number of cases instituted so far is 30 lakhs of the aggregate value of Rs. 64 crores and only Rs. 20 crores have been settled up till now. Sir, the total debts are Rs. 100 crores as revealed by the Banking Enquiry Committee in 1933. Since then interest has accrued at the rate of 36 per cent. So, at that rate of interest I think it has now reached a figure of Rs. 200 crores if not more. Out of Rs. 200 crores only Rs. 64 crores have been accounted for. Nearly 762,000 cases have been dismissed. So, what have we done in 5 years? Only those debtors on whose head the decrees are hanging came before the boards and as regards those against whom there are no suits, they do not approach the boards. Sometimes it is their ignorance which prevent them from coming before the boards and sometimes they are persuaded by the creditors not to go to the boards. The creditors simply ask them to pay Re. 1 only, so that the debts might not be time-barred. As soon as the civil courts are competent to try these cases there would be tremendous rush and the condition of the poor agriculturists might well be imagined. So they should be compelled to come before the boards by law.

Sir, the next provision in the Bill is that instead of waiting and haggling for amicable settlement, Government should set down certain definite rules according to which the debts are to be settled. But my honourable friend has objected to this measure by saying that the Debt Settlement Boards are presided over by persons who have not got sufficient knowledge of law nor have they got sufficient integrity and honesty to be entrusted with the task of settlement of agricultural debts by adjudication. But my suggestion is

that Government should start a temporary department with paid officers whose business will be to devise ways and means as to how to settle the agricultural debts of Bengal satisfactorily, if Government are really bent upon clearing these debts.

When I sugested transference of one-third of the total amount of lands of the debtor to the creditor in usufructuary mortgage for a certain number of years (not exceeding 20 years in any case) for enjoyment by the creditor in full satisfaction of his dues, I did so after taking into consideration the fact that at least 85 per cent. of the agriculturists have absolutely no surplus left to them after meeting their bare necessaries of life. My honourable friend says that before giving any award the Debt Settlement Boards make a regular calculation of the surplus of the debtors. But I say that I have a good deal of experience in this matter inasmuch as I have had to come in close contact with the agriculturists of Bengal in connection with the Land Revenue Commission. We collected statistics and we found that as many as 65 per cent. of the agricultural population of Bengal hold uneconomic holdings. So how can we expect that they will have any surplus after meeting their annual expenditure? One of the chief causes of non-payment of arrear rents is these uneconomic holdings. So if the agricultural debtors are really to be relieved of their burdens of debts, let them part with one-third of their holdings even for twenty years, if necessary, and let them cultivate these lands as *bargadars* under the original landlords. If this expedient is not adopted, I have every reason to think that their entire holdings will be at stake when certificate cases will be instituted by the landlords and the creditors. That is why I wanted the debtors to part with a small portion of their lands for the time being in order to keep their entire holdings intact, and on this calculation I have based that provision in the Bill.

Sir, I have explained the three main provisions of the Bill in respect of which the Hon'ble Minister has raised certain objection, and he has said that these are impractical suggestions. But again I must say that if you want to clear off the debts of the agriculturists of Bengal, drastic and bold measures must be taken. The agriculturists of Bengal are in a desperate position. My honourable friend, I am very sorry to find, has described me as a dreamer, but let me tell him that I am not a dreamer, I am very much awake and I not only take note of the stern reality of life but also of the signs of times which indicate future possibilities. My friend, on the other hand, is a back number. He was born in the 19th century, and he still thinks in terms of the 19th century. He seems to be unaware of the meteoric speed with which the world is moving: he is unaware of the dynamic forces at work: he seems to be unaware of the communist revolution in Russia: he seems to be unaware of the peasants revolution in Ireland: he seems to be unaware of the communist spirit which is gradually being infused in this country. The demon of communism is gradually rearing its head and at this juncture unless we move with the time and effect adjustments in the economic structure of the country and make our mass—the peasantry—contented and prosperous, the very foundation of our social structure may be shaken and bloody revolution may ensue in its train.

I take note of all the forces at work and with a view to avert the disaster I am suggesting some proposals for improving the lot of the agriculturists and if for this I am called a dreamer I will not be at all sorry for it. But my friend will pardon me if I say that if I am a dreamer he is a dead man inasmuch as he is incapable of receiving sensation from outside world. He is thoroughly ignorant that the improvement of the condition of peasants does not brook a moment's delay. He is ignorant of the fact that unless the dead weight of incubus of debt is removed from the chest of the peasantry of the province, they cannot be contented and prosperous and it is the bounden duty of Government to take immediate step towards that direction. Sir, even after this if my friend is determined to oppose this Bill without even telling us that the matter of clearance of agricultural debt will seriously engage the attention of Government, I have no other alternative but to call for a division. I hope all who have any feeling for the agriculturists of Bengal groaning under the weight of debts, will support my motion. With these words I again ask every member of the House to support my motion.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Sir, after hearing the speech of my friend the Leader of the Opposition in reply to mine requesting him to withdraw the motion, I find that he has been inspired by communism, sovietism and other "isms". He said that I am a back number. If I am a back number, I know my friend is a greater back number. I was born in the year 1888; but I think he was born earlier than that. I have watched the movement of communism throughout the world. I am not affraid of communism or socialism or any "ism" which may be at work. Communism is not the point here. I could understand if my honourable friend would have placed before the Legislature a Bill declaring that all the debts of agriculturists or of the debts of middle-class will cease to exist immediately and will be wiped out after the passing of such Bill. Will he do that? Would he accept that? Nobody will accept it. We are marching with the time and we shall have to march with the time. I feel for the poor cultivators not in any way less than my honourable friend, because I was born in a village: I passed my young days in the village with the rural cultivators: I mixed freely with the cultivators without hesitation and I feel for them. I feel for them, but still I am thinking and thinking as to how we can clear off the huge burden of debts under which the agriculturists of Bengal have been suffering. I know also that those debts are crushing their backbone, but I submit, Sir, it is not by such kind of legislation that we shall be able to remove those sufferings. If we sincerely and seriously think of their welfare then it is not by the passing of this Bill that we can do them any good, for in that case instead of doing them any good it will add to their miseries and bring them ruination and destruction. So, I appeal to my honourable friend not to press for this Bill. He suggests that the procedure adopted by the Court of Wards in asking from the creditors the statements of debts of the estate that comes under their control might be adopted in this case. That procedure is that within such and such time statement of debts must be submitted to Government failure to comply with the order would debar the

creditors from getting any payment from the Court of Wards. But may I submit, Sir, that when a particular estate comes under the management of the Court of Wards from a particular mauza or village, everybody in that locality knows that that estate is going to be taken over by the Court of Wards. So they may know the date within which the statements of debts are to be submitted to Government. But in this case how will it be possible for the ignorant masses, ignorant agriculturists to know what is going to be printed in the *Calcutta Gazette*? I ask Sir, whether an agriculturist in the village does know the existence of *Calcutta Gazette* or a newspaper, or a weekly paper? So, suppose through inadvertence three months time passes and then what will be the result? Has my honourable friend thought over that? He only dreams and dreams. He does not take into consideration the practical side of the matter.

So, as I have already stated, this Bill, if passed, will give no relief to the poor agriculturists, but it will add to their miseries, it will add to their troubles. My honourable friend has rightly said that most of the agriculturists are day labourers, and that most of them have got no economic holdings. I agree with him in this respect. And if out of those uneconomic holdings one-third is mortgaged, what will remain, how the cultivators would get their living? (Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: They will work as labourers?) But where? Price of paddy has gone up, and the small quantity of lands that is now under the possession of some of the cultivators are hardly adequate for 3 or 4 months. What will they do next to get their rice or paddy?

So, after taking all these things into consideration, I say, Sir, it will only be lip sympathy if we pass this Bill. No good will result out of this Bill. Therefore, we cannot accept the Bill.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The question before the House is: that the Bengal Agricultural Debtors (Amendment) Bill, 1940, be referred to a Select Committee consisting of—

(1) the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Hashem Ali Khan, Minister-in-charge of the Co-operative Credit and Rural Indebtedness Department,
(2) Mr. Nur Ahmed,
(3) Khan Sahib Abul Quasem,
(4) Mr. Mesbahuddin Ahmed,
(5) Raja Bhupendra Narayan Sinha Bahadur, of Nashipur,
(6) Mr. Naresh Nath Mookerjee,
(7) Mr. W. B. G. Laidlaw,
(8) Mr. Dhirendra Lal Barua,
(9) Mr. Khorshed Alam Chowdhury,
(10) Khan Bahadur M. Shamsuzzoha, and
(11) the mover,

with instructions to submit their report by the 30th June, 1943, and that the number of members whose presence shall be necessary to constitute a quorum shall be four.

The motion was put and lost.

The Bengal Pasture Bill, 1940.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Sir, I beg to move that Bengal Pasture Bill, 1940, be referred to a Select Committee consisting of—

(1) The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, Minister-in-charge of Agriculture Department,
(2) Mr. Nur Ahmed,
(3) Mr. Mesbahuddin Ahmed,
(4) Mr. Hamidul Huq Chowdhury,
(5) Raja Bhupendra Narayan Sinha Bahadur, of Nashipur,
(6) Mr. Naresh Nath Mookerjee,
(7) Mr. W. B. G. Laidlaw,
(8) Khan Bahadur Ataur Rahman,
(9) Mr. Moazzemali Choudhury,
(10) Mr. Rezzaqul Haider Chowdhury, and
(11) the mover,

with instructions to submit their report by the 15th of March, 1943, and that the number of members whose presence shall be necessary to constitute a quorum shall be four.

Sir, I would like, with your permission, to change the date of the submission of the report by the Select Committee from the 15th of March, 1943, to 30th of June, 1943.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Yes, you may do so.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Then, Sir, this is a very short Bill. All that is wanted is that the area under pasture should be extended.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, Order. The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca, is no longer the Minister in charge of the Department of Agriculture.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Then I shall have to substitute the name of the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Hashem Ali Khan, Minister in charge of Agriculture, in place of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca, so that my revised motion will read as follows:—

That the Bill be referred to a Select Committee consisting of—

(1) The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Hashem Ali Khan, Minister-in-charge of Agriculture Department,
(2) Mr. Nur Ahmed,
(3) Mr. Mesbahuddin Ahmed,
(4) Mr. Hamidul Huq Chowdhury,
(5) Raja Bhupendra Narayan Sinha Bahadur, of Nashipur,
(6) Mr. Naresh Nath Mookerjee,

(7) Mr. W. B. G. Laidlaw,
(8) Khan Bahadur Ataur Rahman,
(9) Mr. Moazzemali Choudhury,
(10) Mr. Rezzaqul Haider Chowdhury, and
(11) the mover,

with instruction to submit their report by the 30th of June, 1943, and that the number of members whose presence shall be necessary to constitute a quorum shall be four.

Sir, the only provision in the Bill is that the area under pasture be extended and that provision be made that whenever any land is found in any area to be lying waste for five years of which the people want that it should be converted into pasture, the people there will have to apply to the Collector and the Collector will, after necessary enquiry, acquire the land and reserve it for pasture on payment of a certain amount from a fund to be raised out of private contributions, and Government will have no financial responsibility in this matter. Sir, our livestock is in a very bad condition for want of sufficient pasture lands, and it is absolutely necessary that something should be done towards this direction. With these words, Sir, I move my motion for reference to the Select Committee.

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: On a point of information, Sir. If the date of the submission of the report by the Select Committee be extended to 30th June, 1943, will the Raja Bhupendra Narayan Sinha Bahadur, of Nashipur, be able to serve in the Committee?

Mr. PRESIDENT: He is still a member. When he will go out, someone else may be substituted in his place.

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: If the date is extended to 30th June——

Mr. PRESIDENT: The honourable member may bring about a change at that time. Khan Bahadur, do you propose to substitute any one else for Raja Bahadur?

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Not just now. I shall do so on the 4th, if necessary.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The motion moved: that the Bill be referred to a Select Committee consisting of—

(1) The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Hashem Ali Khan, Minister in charge of Agriculture Department,
(2) Mr. Nur Ahmed,
(3) Mr. Mesbahuddin Ahmed,
(4) Mr. Hamidul Huq Chowdhury,
(5) Raja Bhupendra Narayan Sinha Bahadur, of Nashipur,
(6) Mr. Naresh Nath Mookerjee,
(7) Mr. W. B. G. Laidlaw,
(8) Khan Bahadur Ataur Rahman,
(9) Mr. Moazzemali Chowdhury,

(10) Mr. Rezzaqul Haider Chowdhury, and
(11) the mover,

with instructions to submit their report by the 30th of June, 1943, and that the number of members whose presence shall be necessary to constitute a quorum shall be four.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Mr. President, Sir, the object of this Bill is a very noble one and I know that the cultivators suffer a good deal for want of sufficient pasture lands in the country and cattle die every year in large numbers causing a great loss to the cultivators. I am not going to move the motion which stands in the name of the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. Abdul Karim, and I accept the proposal for reference to the Select Committee.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The question before the House is: that the Bengal Pasture Bill, 1940, be referred to a Select Committee consisting of--

(1) The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Hashem Ali Khan, Minister in charge of Agriculture Department,
(2) Mr. Nur Ahmed,
(3) Mr. Mesbahuddin Ahmed,
(4) Mr. Hamidul Huq Chowdhury,
(5) Raja Bhupendra Narayan Sinha Bahadur, of Nashipur,
(6) Mr. Naresh Nath Mookerjee,
(7) Mr. W. B. G. Laidlaw,
(8) Khan Bahadur Ataur Rahman,
(9) Mr. Moazzemali Chowdhury,
(10) Mr. Rezzaqul Haider Chowdhury, and
(11) the mover,

with instructions to submit their report by the 30th June, 1943, and that the number of members whose presence shall be necessary to constitute a quorum shall be four.

The motion was put and agreed to.

The Bengal Food Adulteration (Amendment) Bill, 1940.

Mr. NUR AHMED: I beg to move that the Bengal Food Adulteration (Amendment) Bill, 1940, be referred to a Select Committee consisting of—

(1) The Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu, Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department,
(2) Mr. R. W. N. Ferguson,
(3) Rai Sahib Jatindra Mohan Sen,
(4) Mr. Lalit Chandra Das,
(5) Khan Bahadur Rezzaqul Haider Chowdhury,
(6) Mr. Moazzemali Chowdhury,
(7) Mr. Dhirendra Lal Barua.
(8) Mr. Sachindra Narayan Sanyal,
(9) Khan Sahib Abul Quasem,

(10) Khan Bahadur Saiyed Muazzamuddin Hosain, and
(11) the mover,

with instructions to submit their report within three months from the date of reference and that the number of members whose presence shall be necessary to constitute a quorum shall be four.

Sir, in moving this motion I shall be very brief. I have explained the purpose of this Bill more than once in this House. It was circulated for opinion and as many as 77 opinions were received and most of them supported the Bill. It is a very simple Bill. There is some lacuna in the present Food Adulteration Act and I have brought forward this Bill in order to remove this lacuna. Unless we have pure food, we cannot live. I appeal to the Hon'ble Minister to accept it. It is a non-contentious matter. I only want by this Bill to remove the defects that exist in the present Act.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Motion moved: that the Bengal Food Adulteration (Amendment) Bill, 1940, be referred to a Select Committee consisting of—

(1) The Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu, Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department,
(2) Mr. R. W. N. Ferguson,
(3) Rai Sahib Jatindra Mohan Sen,
(4) Mr. Lalit Chandra Das,
(5) Khan Bahadur Rezzaqul Haider Chowdhury,
(6) Mr. Moazzemali Chowdhury,
(7) Mr. Dhirendra Lal Barua.
(8) Mr. Sachindra Narayan Sanyal,
(9) Khan Sahib Abul Quasem,
(10) Khan Bahadur Saiyed Muazzamuddin Hosain, and
(11) the mover,

with instructions to submit their report within three months from the date of reference and that the number of members whose presence shall be necessary to constitute a quorum shall be four.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Sir, I have complete sympathy with the motion moved by my honourable friend, but there is some difficulty which probably he is not aware of. This Bill which he has now placed before the House for reference to a Select Committee is the same which was originally introduced in this House by my friend in August, 1938. This Bill seeks to remedy certain defects in the Bengal Food Adulteration Act which it is alleged enable unscrupulous vendors who adulterate to escape punishment. The amendments proposed in the Bill, however, do not appear to be comprehensive and exhaustive enough for the purpose in view. The question of amending the Act was considered by Government in consultation with the Director of Public Health, Bengal, and it was decided to undertake a comprehensive legislation on the lines of the more recent amendment in India and in England, not only for the purpose of removing the defects and lacunæ in the existing Act, but also to widen the scope of

the Act in certain other direction, so as to ensure purity of food. A Bill, namely, the Bengal Pure Food Bill, 1940, was accordingly drawn up by Government. That Bill was introduced in the Bengal Legislative Assembly and circulated for the purpose of eliciting opinion thereon during the monsoon session of 1940; and during the budget session of 1941, the Bill was referred to a Select Committee. The Select Committee held several sittings and tentatively suggested extensive modification in the different provisions of the Bill, but the Committee has not yet been able to conclude its deliberations. It is unfortunate that although the Select Committee has dealt with a very large portion of that Bill, its labours have not yet been concluded and having regard to the rush of work particularly in the sphere of war and civil defence measures, this very important measure had not been given that attention that it deserved. The position today is this that there is a Government Bill, passing through the Select Committee, which has concluded a large part of its deliberations and is waiting to finish its deliberations. The amendments proposed by my honourable friend, the mover of this Bill, have already been taken into consideration and vastly improved upon in the Government Bill which is at the same time more comprehensive. Therefore, I would appeal to my honourable friend to consider whether any useful purpose would be served by referring a non-official Bill now to a Select Committee. In this view of the matter, I would request my honourable friend to withdraw the Bill.

Mr. NUR AHMED: I know, Sir, there is a Government Bill in the Select Committee. But as I do not hear of that Bill much, I thought Government have no intention to bring in the Bill again.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Do you propose to withdraw the Bill?

Mr. NUR AHMED: Yes, Sir, with the permission of the House I propose to withdraw the motion only that the Bengal Food Adulteration (Amendment) Bill, 1940, be referred to a Select Committee.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Is it the pleasure of the House to permit Mr. Nur Ahmed to withdraw his motion?

(The motion was by leave of the House withdrawn.)

Mr. PRESIDENT: As regards the point of order raised by Khan Bahadur Saiyed Muazzamuddin Hosain as to whether the mover of a Bill, has any right of reply, I looked up the past practice and I find that he has a right of reply.

The House now stands adjourned till 1-30 p.m. on Monday, the 22nd March, 1943.

Adjournment.

The Council then adjourned till 1-30 p.m. on Monday, the 22nd March, 1943.

Members absent.

The following members were absent from the meeting held on the 12th March, 1943:—

(1) Khan Bahadur Naziruddin Ahmad.

(2) Rai Bahadur Keshab Chandra Banerjee.

(3) Mr. Humayun Raza Chowdhury.

(4) Khan Bahadur Razzaqul Haider Chowdhury.

(5) Mr. Narendra Chandra Datta.

(6) Khan Bahadur Alhadj Khwaja Muhammad Esmail.

(7) Mr. Kanai Lal Goswami.

(8) Mr. Mohamed Hossain.

(9) The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. Abdul Karim.

(10) Khan Bahadur Muhammad Asaf Khan.

(11) Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan.

(12) Rai Bahadur Brojendra Mohan Maitra.

(13) Mr. J. McFarlane.

(14) Mr. Naresh Nath Mookerjee.

(15) Dr. Radha Kumud Mookerji.

(16) Mr. T. B. Nimmo.

(17) Dr. Kumud Sankar Ray.

(18) Mr. J. B. Ross.

(19) Mr. Birendra Kishore Ray Chowdhury.

(20) Rai Sahib Jatindra Mohan Sen.

(21) Raja Bhupendra Narayan Sinha Bahadur, of Nashipur.

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BENGAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DEBATES

First Session, 1943—No. 17.

THE COUNCIL met in the Legislative Chamber of the Legislative Building, Calcutta, on Monday, the 22nd March, 1943, at 1-30 p.m., being the seventeenth day of the First Session of 1943, pursuant to section 62(2)(*a*) of the Government of India Act, 1935.

Mr. President (the Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY, K.C.I.E.) was in the Chair.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Travelling allowance allowed to members for attending party meeting.

45. Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether travelling allowance is being allowed to members of the Bengal Legislature for attending meetings of the Progressive Coalition Party in Calcutta;

(*b*) whether hitherto any travelling allowance was allowed to any member for attending party meetings; and

(*c*) whether there is any precedence of such travelling allowance being allowed to party members for attending party meetings?

MINISTER in charge of the HOME DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq): (*a*) Travelling allowance at the rate of three first class fares (for journey to, and back from, Calcutta) were allowed to members of the Legislature who were invited in May, 1942, to discuss measures taken in consequence of the denial policy adumbrated by the Government of India. The invitation was not limited to members of any particular party.

(*b*) and (*c*) I have no information.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: With reference to (*a*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state to which other party except the Progressive Coalition Party the invitation was extended?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The invitation was sent to selected members of all the parties of this House.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Were the members of the Muslim League Party invited to attend the meetings?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: One member of the Muslim League Party was invited.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: What is the name of that member?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Mr. Abdul Hamid Chowdhury of Pabna.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOUDHURY: Is it a fact that when Mr. Abdul Hamid Chowdhury of Pabna went to the meeting he was told that he was not the person invited, and it was a mistake for another Hamid?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: No, that was not the case.

Chaukidari Reward Fund.

46. Khan Bahadur ABDUL HAMID CHOWDHURY: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state how the Chaukidari Reward Fund is financed and utilised?

(*b*) What is the unspent balance of the said fund on the 31st March, 1942, in each district?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) The assets of the District Chaukidari Reward Fund consist of fines and penalties levied under sections 8, 27 and 38 of the Chaukidari Act and fines levied under section 22 of the Village Self-Government Act by the Union Board or the District Magistrate or an officer delegated by him. For rules as to the utilisation of the fund, I refer the honourable member to rules 13-16 of the Union Board Manual, Volume 1.

(*b*) The latest available figure of the balance in the fund was Rs.14,557-6-1 as shown in the attached statement. The collection of figures for the 31st March, 1942, would not justify the expenditure of time and labour involved.

Statement referred to in reply to question No. 46.

CHAUKIDARI REWARD FUND.

District.	Balance in hand at the close of the year 1941.		
	Rs.	a.	p.
Dacca	650	10	2
Mymensingh	291	7	2
Faridpur	1,729	10	5
Bakarganj	47	10	8
Chittagong	855	0	8
Tippera	503	11	8
Noakhali	72	8	2
Rajshahi	Nil		
Dinajpur	683	6	3
Jalpaiguri	398	15	3
Rangpur	319	10	6
Bogra	125	7	7
Pabna	561	10	0
Carried over ..	6,239	12	6

District.	Balance in hand at the close of the year 1941.		
	Rs.	a.	p.
Brought forward ..	6,239	12	6
Malda	627	12	0
Darjeeling	448	6	3
Burdwan	866	3	10
Birbhum	17	6	6
Bankura	309	15	10
Midnapore	75	2	8
Hooghly	314	4	10
Howrah	292	10	9
24-Parganas	331	13	4
Nadia	311	6	11
Murshidabad	147	1	9
Jessore	4,318	4	4
Khulna	257	0	5
Total ..	14,557	6	1

Khan Bahadur ABDUL HAMID CHOWDHURY: Arising out of (*b*), in view of the fact that it has been possible for the Home Minister to give figures for certain parts of the question, will the Hon'ble Minister please state how he justifies the statement that "the collection of figures for the 31st March, 1942, would not justify the expenditure of time and labour involved"?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I could not follow the question, Sir. Will the honourable member kindly repeat?

Mr. PRESIDENT: What is your question, Khan Bahadur?

Khan Bahadur ABDUL HAMID CHOWDHURY: It is this, Sir: He has given certain figures in reply to question (*a*). But in regard to another portion of the question he has made a statement which runs as follows, "the collection of figures for the 31st March, 1942, would not justify the expenditure of time and labour involved." Will he please justify this statement?

Mr. PRESIDENT: Well, that is his reply.

Khan Bahadur ABDUL HAMID CHOWDHURY: I know that, but how can he justify this statement when he has given figures in connection with another part of the question?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: My officers who were consulted are of that opinion.

Khan Bahadur ABDUL HAMID CHOWDHURY: It may be so, Sir. But my question is: How would these officers justify their opinion?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That is of course their idea. If, however, the honourable member wants, those figures may be collected.

Gambling at Madhupur Mela.

47. Khan Bahadur ABDUL HAMID CHOWDHURY: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) if it is a fact that a large *mela* is held every year at Madhupur in the Tangail subdivision in the district of Mymensingh on the occasion of the Hindu festival *Goshtha Jatra* when thousands of people including a good number of gamblers assemble there;

(*b*) if it is a fact that as a result of gambling a large number of people including young boys fall into the traps of the gamblers and lose their all;

(*c*) whether it is a fact that the Union Boards of the locality, conscious of the evil consequences of gambling, have adopted a resolution urging the Government through the Subdivisional Officer, Tangail, and the District Magistrate, Mymensingh, for immediate extension of the provisions of the Bengal Public Gambling Act to the Madhupur thana; and

(*d*) if the answer to the above questions be in the affirmative, whether it is in the contemplation of the Government to extend the provisions of the Bengal Public Gambling Act to the area under the Madhupur thana without any further delay; if not, why not?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) and (*b*) Yes.

(*c*) Certain Union Boards passed resolutions to this effect.

(*d*) The relevant provisions of the Public Gambling Act have already been extended to the area concerned.

Khan Bahadur ABDUL HAMID CHOWDHURY: Arising out of (*d*), will the Hon'ble Minister please state when the Gambling Act has been extended to this area?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: To which area?

Mr. PRESIDENT: To the "area concerned."

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I have answered that question in (*d*).

Khan Bahadur ABDUL HAMID CHOWDHURY: I want to know the time when it has been so extended.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: If this is considered very important by my honourable friend, then I want notice.

Mr. Satish Chandra Das Gupta.

48. Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that Mr. Satish Chandra Das Gupta of the Khadipratisthan has been sentenced to 2 years' rigorous imprisonment by the Subdivisional Officer of Feni, under the Defence of India Act? Since when is he in jail?

(*b*) Is it a fact that he was in the Feni subdivision of the Noakhali district to inquire into the grievances of the evacuees and was asked to leave the district by the local authorities?

(*c*) Has not the sentence on Sati Babu erred on the side of severity?

(*d*) Will Government consider the desirability of revising the sentence? And will Government set him free now, considering the period of sentence already undergone? If not, why not?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) Yes. From the 21st July, 1942.

(*b*) His object in returning to Feni was presumably manifold but he was directed to leave the district for activities obstructive of essential and immediate defence preparations.

(*c*) The sentence was exemplary.

(*d*) Government have no power to revise any criminal sentence but they would be prepared to a remission or suspension of his sentence provided he expresses contrition for the offence for which he has been convicted and undertakes to take no further part in any political movement or prejudicial activities actionable under the Defence of India Rules.

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state—arising out of (*b*)—whether Satis Chandra Das Gupta went there to enquire into the grievances of the evacuees?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That was his defence.

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: What his defence was I do not know. But I want to know whether he went there to enquire into the grievances of the evacuees or not.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That may be one of his objects —I cannot say. But the judgment shows that he went there ostensibly with the object mentioned in (*b*).

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: Will the Hon'ble Home Minister please state whether enquiry into the grievances of evacuees is an activity prejudicial and "obstructive of defence preparations"?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: By itself it would not be so.

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state in what way his activities became "destructive of essential and immediate defence preparations"?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That is a detail into which I cannot go.

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister please consider the desirability of releasing this gentleman inasmuch as he is known to be a person wedded to the principle of non-violence?

Mr. PRESIDENT: I do not think this question arises as the Hon'ble Minister has given a complete answer in (*d*).

Recent disturbances.

49. Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY (on behalf of Mr. Humayun Kabir): Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) the total number of men killed and wounded till now as a result of the disturbances which started in Bengal from the 9th of August, 1942;

(*b*) how many of these are Government servants and how many are members of the public;

(*c*) the total number of persons arrested in connection with these disturbances;

(*d*) how many of such arrested persons have been brought to trial;

(*e*) how many of such persons have been released—

(*i*) by order of the Government,

(*ii*) by order of the Court, and

(*iii*) on bail;

(*f*) on how many occasions the military has been called out;

(*g*) on how many occasions have the police resorted to—

(*i*) *lathi* charge, and

(*ii*) firing;

(*h*) on how many occasions have the military resorted to firing; and

(*i*) on how many occasions have the military used machine guns—

(*i*) on the ground, and

(*ii*) from aeroplanes?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Figures from the beginning of the disturbances to the end of November, 1942, are available and are given below:—

(*a*) Killed—88.
Injured—453.

(*b*) Killed—Government servants—3. Others 85.
Injured—Government servants—205. Others 248.

(*c*) 1,126.

(*d*) to (*g*) and (*i*) Detailed information is not available.

(*ii*) 62.

(*h*) and (*i*) (*i*) No information is available.

(*ii*) Once, so far as known.

Police firing at Taltala Bazar.

50. Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state what are the facts leading to the firing by the police on the 16th September, 1942, in Taltala Bazar within Munshiganj subdivision of the Dacca district? How many were killed and how many injured?

(*b*) How many cases of firing and of quelling disturbances in Bengal were resorted to by the police or the military forces since the 8th August, 1942? What is the total number of persons killed and what is the total number of persons wounded during such disturbances?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) In their attempt to disperse an unlawful assembly, the police had to open fire in self-defence when they were overwhelmed and assaulted by vastly superior numbers. One was killed and three injured.

(*b*) The honourable member is referred to the answer given to (*a*) and (*b*) of question No. 49, by Mr. Humayun Kabir, in the current session of the Council. No information is available as to cases of firing by the military forces.

Delegation to visit the Army, Navy and Air Forces at Dehra Dun, etc.

51. Rai Bahadur BROJENDRA MOHAN MAITRA (on behalf of Raja Bahadur Bhupendra Narayan Sinha, of Nashipur): Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) if any delegates from Bengal had been sent by this Government to visit the Army, Navy and Air Forces at Dehra-Dun, Bombay, and other places in India;

(*b*) if so, the dates of their arrival and departure;

(*c*) who constituted the party or parties;

(*d*) in what class they travelled by rail and the rate of their daily allowances;

(*e*) what was the total expenditure incurred;

(*f*) who had nominated or appointed them; and

(*g*) whether it is a fact that none from the Bengal Legislative Council had been selected; if so, what are the reasons?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) The delegation left Howrah on the 5th December, 1942, and returned on the 18th December, except two members, one of whom joined at Dehra-Dun on the 11th and the other at Bombay on the 13th December.

(*c*) A list is placed in the Library.

(*d*) First and Second classes; daily allowances at the rates fixed by the Government of India.

(*e*) About Rs.6,000.

(*f*) Government.

(*g*) No, Mr. S. N. Sanyal, M.L.C., was selected, but he expressed inability to join the delegation.

Election to the Council.

52. Mr. LATAFAT HOSSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether he is aware that one-third of the members of the Bengal Legislative Council are due to retire by the beginning of April next on completion of their terms of membership;

(*b*) if any arrangement is being made for holding the election of members in their places; if not, why not; and

(*c*) when will the election be held for members from (*i*) territorial constituencies; and (*ii*) from the Bengal Legislative Assembly constituency?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) and (*b*) Yes.

(*c*) The programme has already been announced.

Arrests in the Rajshahi disturbances.

53. Rai Bahadur BROJENDRA MOHAN MAITRA (on behalf of Rai Sahib Jatindra Mohan Sen): Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) the total number of persons who have been arrested in connection with the raid at Balurghat on the 14th September, 1942, and in connection with the incidents at Moradanga, Sitaldanga, Bonail, Noapara, Tepukuria, Tiloni, Kawail, Baghdanga, Arjunpur, Malancha, Jitihar and Parilahat;

(*b*) the number of persons arrested from each of the abovementioned places;

(*c*) how many were Caste Hindus, how many Scheduled Caste Hindus and how many Moslems; and

(*d*) how many of the Caste Hindus, how many of the Scheduled Caste Hindus and how many of the Moslems have been set free and how many have been placed on trial?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: A statement is laid in the Library.

Sj. Nishitha Nath Kundu.

54. Rai Bahadur BROJENDRA MOHAN MAITRA (on behalf of Rai Sahib Jatindra Mohan Sen): Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) the date when Sj. Nishitha Nath Kundu, M.L.A., was arrested;

(*b*) whether he was arrested in Calcutta when he was there to attend the meetings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly as a member;

(*c*) whether he was arrested on a warrant from the district of Dinajpur;

(*d*) whether the Home Department was consulted before the arrest; and

(*e*) whether for future guidance, the Government propose to issue orders on the police, not to arrest any member of the Council or Assembly without consulting the Home Department, unless the arrests are immediately required for public safety?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) The 19th September, 1942.

(*b*) He was arrested in Calcutta.

(*c*) and (*d*) No.

(*e*) Government do not consider themselves justified in taking such action in view of section 71(2) of the Government of India Act, 1935.

Small scale industries.

63. Mr. NUR AHMED: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce, Labour and Industries Department be pleased to state what is the total value of supplies for war purposes from the small scale industries in Bengal purchased by the Central Government in the financial years, 1939-40, 1940-41 and 1941-42, and up to September, 1942?

(*b*) What were those war supplies and by what agencies were they produced or manufactured?

(*c*) What measures were adopted by the Government of Bengal to encourage and help small scale war-supply industries and cottage industries in Bengal in the financial years 1939-40, 1940-41 and 1941-42?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN (on behalf of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) and (*b*) The scheme launched by the Central Government for the systematic use of small scale industry in the production of war supplies envisaged that the Provincial Government should act as contractor of the Supply Department and should *inter alia* through the Provincial Industries Department organise and guide the individual producers. The question of the Provincial Government acting as contractor of the Supply Department was carefully considered by this Government and in view of the considerations (1) that, as the goods are to be produced for the Central Government, the provincial control should be kept at a minimum, (2) that it was desirable to encourage independence among small producers and (3) that this Government have neither the staff nor the experience to undertake contractual functions, it was decided with the concurrence of the Central Government that the Director of Industries, Bengal, should act as the agent of the Central Government in the matter of procurement of war supplies. As the Director has been functioning as the agent of the Central Government in the matter of war supplies and as he is responsible solely to that Government in this respect, I do not feel competent to answer the question which relates to a matter of administration for which I am not responsible.

(*c*) The honourable member is referred to the annual administration reports for the years 1939-40 and 1940-41, copies of which are placed in the Library. The report for the year 1941-42 has not yet been published.

Mr. NUR AHMED: Arising out of (*a*) and (*b*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what special measures have been taken by the Government of Bengal to encourage war-supply industry in Bengal through the Co-operative Department?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: As indicated in the answer, the Government of Bengal or the Director of Industries, as agent of the Government of India, is supplying articles to the Government of India: so will you, Sir, kindly give your ruling as to whether this supplementary arises out of this question?

Mr. PRESIDENT: The question does arise out of this.

Mr. NUR AHMED: Sir, may I draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister to the wording of my question? It says—(*a*) "Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce, Labour and Industries Department be pleased to state what is the total value of supplies for war purposes from the small scale industries in Bengal purchased by the Central Government in the financial year?" I only want to know the total value of supplies purchased by the Central Government.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Mr. Nur Ahmed, what is your question?

Mr. NUR AHMED: I want to know the total value of war production produced in Bengal by the Government of India.

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: The total value of supplies involves Rs. 3 crores.

Price control in Hooghly.

64. Mr. K. C. ROY CHOWDHURY: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department be pleased to state whether there is any officer or official organisation in the district of Hooghly for controlling the profiteering by stockists, speculators and large shopkeepers selling daily necessary commodities at prices much higher than rates fixed by the Government?

(*b*) Is it a fact that as a result of high prices demanded of the poor buyers, food riots took place in some localities of the district, such as, Champadanga, etc.?

(*c*) Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that in the period from June to October, 1942, there was such a shortage of rice in a large area comprising the unions of Rashidpur and Rajbalhat in the district that people had to live without food for days together, there being no rice to buy in the market?

(*d*) If the answer to part (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to answer the following questions:—

(*i*) what is the name of officer or organisation; and

(*ii*) where is his or its head office?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN (on behalf of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) Yes. A food riot took place at Champadanga only and nowhere else.

(*c*) No. Government have received no such information.

(*d*) (*i*) Subdivisional Officers of the respective subdivisions and the District Magistrate.

(*ii*) Respective Subdivisional headquarters.

Selling of articles at controlled prices in Jessore.

68. Mr. K. C. ROY CHOWDHURY: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department be pleased to state whether there is any shop in any locality in the district of Jessore selling articles at controlled prices?

(*b*) If so, is there any such shop in the Unions of Chandibarpur and Singia, police-station Narail, and Naldi Union Board, police-station Lohagora, in the district of Jessore?

(*c*) If the answer to part (*b*) be in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the names of the localities in the above area where such shop exists?

(*d*) If answer to (*b*) is in the negative, whether the Government have any intention to start such shops in the above area for the poor people in near future? If not, why not?

(*e*) Is there any controlling and supply officer in the Narail subdivision, district Jessore? If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to answer the following questions:—

(*i*) what are his duties;

(*ii*) how many markets and shops has he inspected in the last three months; and

(*iii*) how many persons have been prosecuted by the officer for selling commodities at prices higher than controlled rates?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN (on behalf of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) All the shops of this district are expected to sell articles at the controlled prices.

(*b*) Yes. But there is no Singia Union in police-station Narail.

(*c*) At Rathadanga, Naldi and Mithapur.

(*d*) Does not arise.

(*e*) Yes. One—

(*i*) to enforce the Food Grains and Sugar Licensing orders, to check stocks and prices and to compile statistical information and generally to act under the direction of the Subdivisional Officer in all matters concerning the control of supplies, distribution and prices of essential foodstuffs and other controlled commodities;

(*ii*) markets 49 and shops 245;

(*iii*) four persons.

Evacuees from Burma.

71. Mr. NUR AHMED: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state if it is a fact that about 40,000 evacuees from Burma, mostly Moslems, have arrived in Chittagong?

(*b*) Is it a fact that the District Magistrate of Chittagong has issued an appeal through the Press to the public for cloth and other things for their relief?

(*c*) If so, what steps have been adopted by the Government of Bengal to give them relief?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) and (*b*) Yes.

(c) The Government of India have accepted responsibility for rendering financial and other assistance to evacuees from the eastern war zones and dependants of persons detained in enemy-occupied territory. Under the Government of India scheme, recoverable advances are being granted to evacuees who are in need of immediate relief, both by the District Magistrate of Chittagong and by the Special Officer, Evacuees, in Calcutta.

The Government of India have also placed at the disposal of the District Officer a substantial grant for the purchase of clothes, which he has already utilised.

Mr. NUR AHMED: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is aware that in spite of the advances made by the Government of India through the District Officer, the condition of the evacuees is very miserable and most of them are without shelters and are running hither and thither for help? Have Government done anything for their relief?

Mr. PRESIDENT: Mr. Nur Ahmed, what is your point?

Mr. NUR AHMED: My point is, Sir, whether the attention of the Government of Bengal has been drawn to the miserable condition of these evacuees in spite of the advances made by the Government of India, and what action they have taken?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Are the Burma evacuees meant?

Mr. NUR AHMED: My question is about the evacuees from Burma.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I want notice. I shall make a statement later on.

Khan Sahib FARIDUDDIN AHMED: With reference to answer (c), what is the extent of the Government of India's responsibility? What does it cover?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The Government of India have accepted responsibility for rendering financial and other assistance to evacuees from the eastern war zones, and as I have already mentioned, the Provincial Government have also got their own responsibility in the matter, and therefore no question of the extent of responsibility arises.

Khan Sahib FARIDUDDIN AHMED: Why was it thought necessary that the District Magistrate of Chittagong should issue an appeal to the public for augmenting Government resources when Government resources in the matter of relief were adequate?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: As a matter of fact, that is a matter of opinion. The money granted by the Government of India may not have been adequate and further funds were necessary.

Khan Sahib FARIDUDDIN AHMED: What is meant by the answer "recoverable advances"?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: By "recoverable advances" is meant advances that are to be recovered later on.

Khan Sahib FARIDUDDIN AHMED: If relief is given by means of advances that are to be recovered later on, then it is no relief at all.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That is not correct, because gratuitous relief is also given.

Disturbances at Balurghat.

72. **Rai Bahadur BROJENDRA MOHAN MAITRA (on behalf of Rai Sahib Jatindra Mohan Sen):** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) what was the approximate number of persons who attacked the Government buildings at Balurghat and set fire to them on the 14th September, 1942;

(*b*) what was the extent and value of the damages done to the buildings, furniture and records separately;

(*c*) if the people all belonged to the town of Balurghat; if not, what was the approximate proportion of the town and village people; what is the population of Balurghat town;

(*d*) what were the distances of the villages from where they came;

(*e*) what was the approximate time when they first appeared in the town and when they left the town;

(*f*) if they approached the Subdivisional Officer during this period, and if so, when;

(*g*) if there had been hunger-marchings recently by villagers, and did the Subdivisional Officer think that they were similar marchers;

(*h*) whether most of the village people carried gunny and *behukas* (bamboo carriers) and whether they begged of the Subdivisional Officer for paddy;

(*i*) whether the crowd looted paddy from *golas* of Parsadanga Kutchery located in the town areas, also from the *golas* at Dangighat, 2½ miles from the town;

(*j*) whether the Subdivisional Officer or the local police tried to disperse the crowd at any time;

(*k*) how far were the Government buildings from the quarters of the Subdivisional Officer and the police thana; and

(*l*) whether the police offered any resistance when the buildings were attacked and set fire to and was any arrest made at or about the time of the occurrence?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) The crowd is estimated at about 8,000.

(*b*) Detailed estimates have not been made and their preparation would involve a disproportionate expenditure of time and labour. A rough estimate is that the total damage will not be short of Rs.1 lakh.

(*c*) No; about 5 to 6 per cent. of the mob and almost all its leaders were residents of the town: the total population of Balurghat is about 5,000.

(*d*) From 2½ to 18 miles.

(*e*) Approximately at 8-30 and 11-30 a.m.

(*f*) The only approach to the Subdivisional Officer was that the leader of the mob was taken to him by the police at 9 a.m.

(*g*) No: though some villagers used to approach the Subdivisional Officer in small numbers.

No: their number, deportment, weapons and conduct gave him no ground for so thinking.

(*h*) No: most of them had bows, arrows, *lathas*, spears and *farshas*: they did not beg for paddy.

(*i*) and (*j*) Yes.

(*k*) The Sub-Registry office and the civil courts are respectively 300 and 325 yards from the Subdivisional Officer's quarters and 150 yards further from the police-station.

(*l*) The Havildar in charge of the Sub-Treasury threatened to open fire in the event of an attack upon the Sub-Treasury. No arrest was made during the occurrence.

Lino-operators of the Bengal Government Press.

73. Rai Bahadur BROJENDRA MOHAN MAITRA (on behalf of Mr. Humayun Kabir): Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Finance Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) what is the total number of Lino-operators (Confidential and outside to be shown separately) in the permanent establishment of the Bengal Government Press;

(*b*) what is the number of Hindu, Moslem and other Lino-operators in the permanent establishment of the Bengal Government Press (out and Confidential to be shown separately) in 1940;

(*c*) what is the number of Hindu, Moslem and other Lino-operators in the permanent establishment of the Bengal Government Press (out and Confidential to be shown separately) in 1942;

(*d*) how many permanent vacancies in the post of Lino-operators were filled up in 1941;

(*e*) how many of these were filled up by Moslems, Hindus and others, respectively;

(*f*) if the communal ratio is maintained in filling up permanent vacancies in the post of Lino-operators;

(*g*) whether it is a fact that there is going to be a permanent vacancy in the post of Lino-operators during the year; and

(*h*) whether the authorities of the Bengal Government Press consider the desirability of promoting a suitable Moslem to that vacancy?

MINISTER in charge of the FINANCE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq):

(*a*) Confidential Section	.. .. ..	9
Open Section	.. ..	16
	Total	25

	Moslems.	Hindus.	Scheduled Castes.	Other Communities.	Total.
(b) Confidential Section	Nil	1	Nil	8	9
Open Section ..	2	11	Nil	1	14
(c) Confidential Section	Nil	1	Nil	8	9
Open Section ..	1	14	Nil	1	16

(d) Three.

(e) The three posts were filled by Hindus.

(f) No. At present the Communal Ratio Rules do not apply to piece-workers.

(g) No.

(h) Does not arise.

Dearness allowance to Government servants.

74. Rai Bahadur BROJENDRA MOHAN MAITRA (on behalf of Mr. Humayun Kabir): (a) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Finance Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the index-prices during the last three years of the present war are much higher than the index-prices current during the continuance of the last Great War in 1914?

(b) Is he aware that the index-prices of the necessaries of life have suddenly gone up in some cases by about 200 or 300 per cent. during the last week or so?

(c) Is he aware that such sudden rise in prices of necessaries have hard hit the Government servants irrespective of their pay?

(d) Is it a fact that Government have sanctioned only a small sum by way of compensation of dearness allowance to Government staff getting a salary of Rs.108 or less?

(e) Is he aware that Government servants getting higher salaries than that also require some assistance to tide over the present difficulties?

(f) Is he aware that during the last Great War the surcharge on income-tax was much less than the surcharge levied during the present war?

(g) Is he aware that for rendering help to Government servants Government of India amended the General Provident Fund Rules allowing subscribers to reduce the repayment of loans by 33 per cent.? If so, will he be pleased to take immediate steps for giving relief to all Government servants not getting any financial relief by way of dearness allowance by the grant of concession of repayment of loans from General Provident Fund by 50 per cent.?

(h) Will he be pleased also to take steps to get the Rules for General Provident Fund relaxed by which subscribers to the Fund will get loans liberally irrespective of the number of loans already taken from the Fund? If not, what steps do the Government propose to take to give relief to Government servants getting salaries of Rs.110 or over?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) No.

(*b*) Prices of rice, *atta*, flour, coarse cloth and coal have gone up by more than 200 per cent. The increase in respect of other items has been smaller.

(*c*) Yes.

(*d*) Copies of Finance Department Memos. No. 1975F., dated the 20th August, 1942, 2800F., dated the 30th December, 1942, 80F., dated the 11th January, 1943, and 629F., dated the 5th February, 1943, have been placed in the Library and will show the rates of dearness allowance admissible to different classes of Government servants.

(*e*) It is not contended that Government servants drawing higher salaries have not also been hit by the rise in the cost of living but what our dearness allowance scheme aims at is not to offset the rise in cost of living but to ensure that the wages of no Government servant are demonstrably below subsistence level and that within Government's resources, relief is granted where it is most needed.

(*f*) There was no surcharge on income-tax during the last war but in spite of this, the income-tax now payable by persons with income of less than Rs.2,200 per annum is appreciably less than the tax payable during the last war.

(*g*) On enquiry it has been ascertained that the Government of India have not made any such amendment of the General Provident Fund Rules.

(*h*) All Government servants do not contribute to the General Provident Fund. Action on the lines suggested will not therefore afford general relief.

Dearness allowance is now admissible in certain areas to Government servants drawing a salary up to Rs.163 and for the present, no further concession is contemplated.

Home Department.

75. Khan Sahib ABDUL AZIZ: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state what was the total number of officers of all rank working in all the branches of the Home Department on the 30th November, 1942?

(*b*) Out of them, how many were Moslems, how many Europeans and Anglo-Indians and how many were other non-Moslems? What was the percentage of strength of these three communities in the services under question on that date?

(*c*) Were the Communal Ratio Rules applied to all the appointments made in the Home Department since the said rules were enforced? If not, why not?

(*d*) What is the percentage of Moslem officers in all the ranks of the police services in Bengal and in Calcutta?

(*e*) Do the Government propose to make up the deficiency, if any, in the percentage of the Moslem ratio in the police services by some suitable measures? If not, why not?

(*f*) How many home guards and their captains and adjutants have been recruited up to this date in Bengal? Out of these, how many are Moslems and how many are non-Moslems in every grade and rank?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am making enquiries and will give the information desired in due course.

Arrests in Dinajpur.

79. Rai Bahadur BROJENDRA MOHAN MAITRA (on behalf of Rai Sahib Jatindra Mohan Sen): Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) the number of persons who have been arrested in the district of Dinajpur, subdivision by subdivision, under the Defence of India Act and Rules, in connection with the last Congress movement;

(*b*) how many of such persons have been convicted after trial and how many are in jail as security prisoners;

(*c*) how many of them are in the Dinajpur district jail and how many in other jails, with the names of such jails;

(*d*) how many of such persons were females and what were their occupations before such arrests;

(*e*) how many of the security prisoners have been placed in division I and division II and whether any provision has been made for the maintenance of the dependants of the security prisoners who are under detention in jails?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ:

(*a*) Balurghat	...	129
Thakurgaon	...	Nil
Sadar	...	86
(*b*) Convicted after trial	...	16
In jail as security prisoners	...	45
(*c*) Dinajpur Jail (convicts)	...	10
Presidency Jail (convict)	...	1
Berhampore Jail (convicts)	...	3
Dinajpur Jail (security prisoners)	...	3
Rangpur Jail (security prisoner)	...	1
Rajshahi Jail (security prisoners)	...	41

(*d*) Females—2 convicts—students.

(*e*) For the first part of the question the honourable member is referred to rule 4 of the Bengal Security Prisoners Rules, 1940, a copy of which is placed in the Library and for the second part the answer is as follows:—

Four security prisoners have been granted family allowances and the cases of 11 others are under my consideration.

Sj. D. N. Mukherji, M.L.A.

77. Mr. SHRISH CHANDRA CHAKRAVERTI: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) why Sj. D. N. Mukherjee, M.L.A., was arrested under rule 129 of the Defence of India Rules and thereafter released unconditionally and again arrested a day after;

(*b*) whether before these arrests the Hon'ble Minister was consulted and all relevant facts and documents placed before him; and

(*c*) if not, whether the Hon'ble Minister proposes to send for the same to find out whether there are sufficient grounds for his arrest?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) He was arrested under rule 129 of the Defence of India Rules for acting in a manner calculated to promote, or to assist the promotion of, rebellion against the authority of Government and his unconditional release thereafter was an unfortunate mistake which was rectified by his subsequent re-arrest.

(*b*) No.

(*c*) I have already seen the relevant papers and found that there are sufficient grounds for his arrest and confirmed his continued detention for the present.

Mr. SHRISH CHANDRA CHAKRAVERTI: Arising out of (*c*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to give me an idea as to how long Mr. Mukherji is going to be detained?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: It is very difficult to say that. But I may mention for the information of the honourable member that we have undertaken periodical examination of these cases and wherever we find that anyone can be released without detriment to the public safety orders are passed for his release.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he was aware of the fact that Mr. Mukherji was re-arrested immediately after he was released unconditionally?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: No.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Was the matter brought to his notice after he was released?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: As stated in the printed reply, he was arrested under Rule 129 of the Defence of India Rules and he was released through a mistake and was re-arrested.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Was he re-arrested with the knowledge of the Home Minister?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Yes.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: When the question of his re-arrest was brought before him had he consented to the re-arrest?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The point is that after he was re-arrested I was informed.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Was the fact of his being released brought to the notice of the Hon'ble Minister before the re-arrest was made?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I do not remember that.

Mr. SHRISH CHANDRA CHAKRAVERTI: Arising out of (*c*) and out of the statement made by the Hon'ble Minister that periodical examination is made by him of these cases to see who can be released without detriment to the public safety, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when he is expected to make this examination again?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: These cases were examined very recently, and I cannot give the honourable member a definite date in reply; but I can say that in the beginning of the next month these cases will be examined again.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Are these cases examined by the Hon'ble Minister himself or by the permanent officers of the department?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: These cases are examined personally by me from time to time.

Different appointments.

78. Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS (on behalf of Mr. Amulyadhone Roy): (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the number of vacancies permanent, temporary or otherwise occurred in each department and office of the Government since the Communal Ratio Rules came into force; and

(*ii*) the number of Hindus, Muslims and Scheduled Castes appointed in each department and office since that date?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to lay on the Table the returns showing the appointments made by different departments and appointing authorities including the Public Service Commission since that date?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The collection of the information asked for will involve an excessive expenditure of time, labour and stationery and in the present emergency and in the public interest I must decline to burden Government officers with such a task. If the honourable member wishes to have information about communal distribution of posts in any particular office or department I shall be happy to supply it as far as practicable.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is not the practice that the heads of departments are to maintain a register showing the communal ratio of appointments, etc.?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I do not think so.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Is there any special officer who examines the communal ratio and who scrutinises the maintenance of the communal ratio in the Government service?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: There is a special officer who scrutinises the cases that are referred to him as to whether a particular post should be reserved for a particular community. He does not go through all the new appointments made in all the departments of Government in order to find out that the communal ratio rules have been observed or not. He examines the cases that are brought to his notice.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that one of the terms of the communal ratio rules was that periodic statements of appointments by authorities other than the Government itself are submitted to the Government for scrutiny?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Yes, that is so.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Will the Hon'ble Minister please tell us why he does now say that the amount of time that will be involved in making an enquiry by the district officers will be so great that he does not want to burden the district officers with this collection of information? Can he not make an enquiry in the Secretariat files which contain all the reports of appointments in the district offices?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: It is difficult to collect the appointments made from month to month and time to time.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Is not there an officer who examines these cases and does not the rule provide that Government should receive the report of any appointment made in the district? This information can be had from that officer in the Secretariat.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: It is not the duty of the Communal Ratio Officer to undertake the work mentioned by the honourable member. But so far as the present collection of information is concerned, in our judgment, in the judgment of Government, the work is too heavy to be undertaken at the present time.

Shifting of Government Offices from Calcutta.

79. Mr. MOAZZEMALI CHOUDHURY: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that for keeping up the morale of the people Government is not prepared to shift the offices from Calcutta to other safer areas in order to protect the lives of Government servants from the effects of air raids?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Government have already as a precautionary dispersal measure transferred some administrative sections to certain places outside Calcutta.

Imposition of collective fines at Beldanga.

80. Rai Bahadur BROJENDRA MOHAN MAITRA (on behalf of Mr. Ranajit Pal Chowdhury): Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether the District Magistrate of Murshidabad had it announced just before the last Pujas by beat of drum through the Beldanga Union Board among both Hindus and Muslims that they would have to pay collective fines to the extent of Rs.5,000 for damages caused to the local Post Office and railway station on the 19th August, 1942, by civil rioters;

(*b*) whether in connection with those offences a number of Hindus were put on their trial, convicted and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment;

(*c*) whether petitions for exemption from the collective fines were called for;

(*d*) if so, the number of the petitioners who sought for such exemption and the result of their petitions;

(*e*) the reason or reasons for which of the Hindus only Sj. Dindayal Banerjee and Sj. Aswini Kumar Chatterjee were exempted from payment of the collective fine;

(*f*) the reason or reasons why the amount of Rs.5,000 originally intended to be imposed on members of both the communities was kept intact for imposition on the Hindus only when no Muslim was found fit to be so fined;

(*g*) the nature of report or reports on which the authorities have acted in arriving at their conclusions for the imposition of the collective fine; and

(*h*) the nature of report available on which one Charupada Garai who died about 4 years ago was included in the list of persons fined collectively?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) and (*c*) Yes.

(*b*) A number of persons of Beldanga were convicted. A greater number of culprits however evaded detection.

(*d*) Sixty-nine assessees applied for exemption and 38 of these were exempted.

(*e*) Each case was considered on its merits. They were exempted from the payment of the fine on account of their active assistance to the forces of law and order.

(*f*) The Muslims were exempted, because they had as a class kept aloof from the disturbances and had evinced no sympathy with the perpetrators of the outrages or their objects to which as a community they were known to be opposed.

(*g*) The failure of the inhabitants of Beldanga to lodge timely information with local authorities as to the intentions of, or to offer active resistance

to, or to identify subsequently, those who had actually taken part in lawlessness made it appear to the District Magistrate that the inhabitants had rendered themselves liable to a collective fine under section 3 of the Collective Fines Ordinance, 1942.

(*h*) Charupada Garai was not assessed to any part of this fine.

Finance Department.

81. Khan Sahib ABDUL AZIZ: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Finance Department be pleased to state what is the total number of officers and members of the clerical staff working in the various branches of the Finance Department on the 30th November, 1942?

(*b*) Out of these, how many are Moslems and how many are non-Moslems in each grade and class of these services on that date?

(*c*) Do the Communal Ratio Rules apply to all these services? If not, to what class of services do not these rules apply?

(*d*) What is the present percentage of Moslems and non-Moslems, respectively, in all classes of services of this department?

(*e*) Do the Government propose to take any suitable steps to make up the deficiency in the strength of the Moslems, if any, in these services? If so, what are they? If not, why not?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*), (*b*) and (*d*) A statement is laid in the Library.

(*c*) and (*e*) There is no direct recruitment to the gazetted posts in the Finance Department: for that reason appointments to these posts are not governed by the Communal Ratio Rules.

The Communal Ratio Rules apply in the case of appointments to (1) Upper Division clerical posts to be filled by direct recruitment, and (2) all Lower Division posts.

Export of rice and paddy from Bengal.

82. Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN (on behalf of Mr. Humayun Kabir): Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Labour, Commerce and Industries Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) the amount of paddy and rice exported from the port of Calcutta during the month of February, 1943;

(*b*) whether a large volume of rice has been exported to South Africa from Calcutta during the period; and

(*c*) if the answer to (*b*) is in the affirmative, whether such export was made with the consent of the Provincial Government?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN (on behalf of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) 82·25 tons.

(*b*) No.

(*c*) Does not arise.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: With reference to answer (*a*), to which countries the 82·25 tons of paddy and rice were exported?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: United Kingdom—3 tons; Ceylon—·45 tons; Egypt—2·15 tons, and so on.

Jute.

83. **Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN:** Will the Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture Department please supply the figures regarding jute in Bengal for the last 5 years—

(*a*) area under jute each of the 5 years;
(*b*) final forecast of yield each year;
(*c*) actual yield each year;
(*d*) export each year;
(*e*) internal consumption each year; and
(*f*) average price each year (*i*) in Calcutta and (*ii*) in mufassal.

MINISTER in charge of the AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Hashem Ali Khan): A statement is laid on the table.

Statement referred to in reply to question No. 83.

	(*a*) Area under jute.	(*b*) Final Forecast of yield.	(*c*) Actual yield (commercial crop).	(*d*) Exports.	(*e*) Internal consumption.	(*f*) Average prices	
						Pucca bales in Calcutta	Mufassal.
	(acres in thousand)	(bales in thousand)	(bales in thousand)	(bales in thousand)	(bales in thousand)	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p. per md.
1937-38 ..	2,889	8,680	10,719	3,717	7,002	33 13 4	..
1938-39 ..	3,164	6,844	10,432	3,879	6,553	41 5 10	..
1939-40 ..	3,161	9,750	10,626	3,111	7,515	66 4 8	..
1940-41 ..	5,669	13,186	7,284	1,400	5,884	37 14 0	7 14 4
1941-42 ..	2,152	5,474	8,694	1,542	7,152	53 6 0	11 0 0
5 years' average.	3,497	8,787	9,551	2,739	6,821	..	..
1942-43 ..	3,292	9,014	..	..	..		..

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: With reference to the statement, will the Hon'ble Minister kindly say why the consumption in 1940-41 was so small and the price so low?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: On account of the war and consequent difficulties of transport.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister kindly say why the price of jute went down by nearly half when the actual yield was less by one-third?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: This is also due to the war and want of transport facilities.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOUDHURY: Will the Hon'ble Minister kindly tell us if he is aware of the corresponding prices of raw jute and the manufactured jute in the year under question, viz., 1940-41?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: You see the price that is given in the statement.

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: Arising out of the statement, will the Hon'ble Minister please say if it is a fact that Government have sanctioned 2,000 acres of lands to be put under jute cultivation in the year 1942-43? If it is so, then is it 50 per cent. of 1940-41?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: No, it is two-thirds. The honourable member may remember that jute acreage was fixed at two-thirds of the recorded figure of 1940-41 and subsequently it was reduced by one-half.

Shortage of rice.

84. Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Commerce, Labour and Industries Department be pleased to state what action, if any, has been taken by Government to meet the deficit in respect of rice as given out by the Government in reply to Council question No. 29 of the 24th February, 1943?

(*b*) When does the Government expect fresh supply from outside, if any?

(*c*) What is the amount of import and export of rice up till now during the current year?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN (on behalf of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) The total quantity of rice required for consumption cannot be accurately estimated. The actual deficit is not apprehended to be more than 10 per cent. against which there is the probability of some stock remaining from last year's exceptionally good crop. The estimated requirements were based on an average of 344 lbs. of rice per head per annum. The crop forecasts together with nett imports for 3 years preceding 1942 placed the average resources at about 76 lakh tons against the average requirements of 92 lakh tons. Government, however, are trying to import from surplus provinces through Government of India who have inaugurated a scheme of co-ordinated purchase of food grains. Along with a scheme of distribution which is now under consideration these supplies are expected to reduce the deficit to a minimum.

(*b*) No information is available at the moment.

(c) Total import during 1942 and January, 1943—1·3 lakh tons.

Total export during 1942 and January, 1943—2·84 lakh tons.

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Sir, in reply to this part of the question, namely, (b), with your permission, I would like to substitute the answer by information which has reached us recently. "In the light of the latest information, it may be stated that imports are expected at once in very substantial quantities and special arrangements are being made by the Central Government to expedite it. It would not be in the public interest to disclose the figures, but this import would benefit not only Calcutta but also other deficit areas."

The other portions of the answer are as in print.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: In the answer it is stated that "the actual deficit is not apprehended to be more than 10 per cent." But is the Hon'ble Minister who is deputising for the Hon'ble the Nawab Bahadur of Dacca aware that the Nawab Bahadur in a statement some time ago in this very House said that the deficit was 23 per cent.?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: That statement was made on the assumption that 92 lakh tons was the average consumption for Bengal and that figure was arrived at on the calculation of 344 lbs. per head per annum, but the average of the figure given in the reply shows that 76 lakh tons is the real consumption figure. So, if we take that figure to be the correct figure, the deficit is only 10 per cent.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: When the Hon'ble Minister made the statement, was he not aware of this figure of 76 as against 92?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: It is not possible for me to say that.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: But where is the Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur to answer this question? He is evidently ashamed to come before this House and answer the questions relating to his department.

Next Sitting of the House.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, before you proceed to take up the other business today, may I be permitted to make a statement regarding the sitting of the Council for tomorrow? It has been found that for the Lower House it becomes extremely inconvenient if proceedings do not begin early enough, so that members may start back for their homes before the evening sets in. Ordinarily, the Lower House sits at 3-15 p.m. and when the Council and the Assembly sit on the same day, the Assembly does not get enough time for the transaction of its business before darkness sets in. Therefore we decided on Saturday that the Council may not sit tomorrow but that it may be adjourned till the 30th of this month. I regret very much that timely information could not be given to you, Sir, and therefore the decision that has been taken is from that point of view somewhat irregular. If you are pleased to excuse this inability on our part

to give this timely intimation and agree with me, then the Council may be adjourned till the 30th of this month and if you think proper some further days may also be allotted after the 30th. If, on the contrary, members and the House decide to go on with the discussion tomorrow, we will revoke our decision and go on with the business.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, order. The point is this: The House may remember that today was fixed for the conclusion of the debate on the food situation and tomorrow was allotted especially for discussion of the jute situation. Now, only this morning the Secretary received an intimation from the Home Department of the Government that this House would not meet tomorrow but would meet on the 30th instead, and the Chief Minister has just explained that this decision was taken without giving us sufficient time, and I feel that it is rather inconvenient to the members to be told when they assemble here that there would be no sitting tomorrow, especially when a date was fixed after full consultation with the Chair for the purpose of discussing a special subject. But in view of the statement made by the Hon'ble Chief Minister, I think we can decide either to meet tomorrow or to meet on the 30th. I would, however, like to have the opinion of the party leaders as to whether they desire to take up the discussion on jute tomorrow or on the 30th.

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: We will have no objection if the discussion on jute is taken up on the 30th.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: We would rather like to have a longer adjournment, because after nine days we have only met today, some arriving yesterday and some today, and it would be better for us if the House is adjourned till 4th or 5th April.

Mr. W. B. C. LAIDLAW: We would like to discuss the jute position tomorrow as arranged.

Mr. SHRISH CHANDRA CHAKRAVERTI: We have no objection to this proposal.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I think it would be more convenient to continue the discussion tomorrow. So, I hope Government will agree.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Yes, Sir, we agree.

Adjournment Motion.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I have received notice of an adjournment motion by Khan Bahadur Saiyed Muazzamuddin Hosain. Khan Bahadur Sahib, will you kindly explain to the House how this is a definite matter of urgent public importance?

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Sir, this matter is certainly very urgent: people are starving at the present moment, and it is inhuman and cruel to collect by threat and certificate procedure the agricultural loans. If this is not an urgent matter of importance, I do not know what is. It is a crime to realise from the poor agriculturists the agricultural

loans at this time of the year. What was the Government doing during the months of December and January when the crops were reaped? Government did not take any action at that time: *boro* crop is not yet ripe and the Government can certainly wait a month and a half when that crop will be harvested and after that they can realise the agricultural loans. The agriculturists are passing through a critical time: they are half-fed, famished, and it is cruel and a crime to realise the loan now by threat and certificate: their resources have already been exhausted and now to threaten certificate and apply physical force for the realisation of the agricultural loan is nothing short of inhumanity and cruelty. From that point of view I think no sane Government can carry on loan realisation at this critical juncture.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY and Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: We have not got a copy of the notice, and we do not know what the motion is about.

Mr. PRESIDENT: It is being supplied to honourable members. I have carefully gone through the question, and I quite appreciate the point made by the Leader of the Opposition. But I think his purpose can be equally served if he puts a short-notice question and the Hon'ble Minister consents to reply to it, because the Chair is very reluctant to interrupt the business of the House for a subject like this. Steps have been taken by Government in this matter in the course of their ordinary administrative duties. So, if the business of the House is to be adjourned for discussing matters as these, I am afraid, we shall not make any progress. I would suggest, therefore, that you put a short-notice question and draw the attention of the Government and of the House to the seriousness of the situation.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Sir, may I make a suggestion? I had sent a wire to the Hon'ble the Revenue Minister on the plight of those people who are being forced to pay up agricultural loans now—I have myself seen with my own eyes how they have been suffering from food shortage—and in that telegram I requested the Hon'ble Minister to suspend realization of loans till the next crops. So, if he makes a statement ordering the suspension of realization of loans, we will be satisfied for the present.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, I can quite realize the anxiety of my honourable friend the Leader of the Opposition with regard to this matter. He has in fact made over to me a representation in writing which I have forwarded to the Collector of the district, and if the situation there is of the description mentioned in this representation, then I shall certainly see that no coercive action is taken to realize the loans. In fact, the position is this: On the threat of certificate and personal torture, no Government, whether this Government or any other Government, can allow realization of loans. If there is physical torture, I shall certainly look into the matter and make a statement as early as possible. It cannot be made today, because I have to obtain information from the local officers. I hope in the meantime the honourable member would be good enough to give me further details of the matter.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Has the Hon'ble Minister got my telegram which was sent by me four days ago?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I have not received any.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: May I point out, Sir, another fact? One man is being prosecuted actually in a court for asking the distressed people not to abide by the Government decision and pay by selling paddy.

Mr. PRESIDENT: In this particular area?

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: No, Sir, in Noakhali.

Mr. PRESIDENT: In view of the statement made by the Hon'ble Minister, do you propose to move your adjournment motion, Khan Bahadur?

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: But, Sir, he has not made any statement. He has at the same time said that he did not even receive my telegram which I sent four days ago.

Mr. PRESIDENT: But the Hon'ble Minister says that he has not got the information and that he has got to obtain the information before he can make a statement.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: In the meantime will the realization of loans go on?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I have already taken action on the representation handed over to me. I shall state before the House tomorrow whether or not my office has received the telegram sent by the Leader of the Opposition. If I receive the telegram, I shall certainly make an enquiry, and if I discover that the situation is as bad as described by the Leader of the Opposition then the usual procedure will follow. I do not want to stop realization of agricultural loans, because very large sums of money are outstanding throughout the province. But if I find that in any specified area there has been distress of an unprecedented character, certainly agricultural loans will not be realized by the application of physical torture.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Does the Hon'ble Minister propose to make a statement tomorrow?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Tomorrow I shall not be able to collect the information. I shall make a statement at the next sitting of the Council.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Sir, may I put a short-notice question, as you have advised?

Mr. PRESIDENT: I would suggest you to put a short-notice question and on the basis of that question let the Hon'ble Minister make an enquiry.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: That is a fair proposal, Sir, and is certainly acceptable to me.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Then, Khan Bahadur, you are not moving your adjournment motion?

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: I only do not move it now, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: In any case, I have not yet made up my mind as to whether I am going to allow this motion or not.

Mr. NUR AHMED: I gave notice of an adjournment motion——

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, order. Khan Bahadur Saiyed Muazzamuddin Hosain.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Sir, is it the principle of Government to realise recoveries even when there is no crop?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: The notice of this motion has been received by me this afternoon. I have been told that these collections commenced since December, 1942. If that is so, then under section 92 of our rules it cannot be moved.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Mr. Nur Ahmed, if you put a short-notice question, then I shall give you sufficient opportunity to put supplementary questions.

Mr. NUR AHMED: Sir, I gave a notice of an adjournment motion regarding the very urgent subject about the distress in Chittagong owing to the shortage of food.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I am afraid, consent has been refused to that motion because the matter is already under discussion before the House.

Mr. NUR AHMED: Sir, the condition of Chittagong is very serious. Rice is not at all available in Chittagong town, and in the mufassal rice is selling at 1½ seers per rupee. I have seen this state of things with my own eyes.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Today we are discussing the food situation in the province, and my honourable friend may very well deal with the situation at Chittagong. I realise that this is a very serious matter, and Government will be well advised to listen to the speech of the honourable member who represents that constituency.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I have already refused consent, because the very subject is under discussion. Mr. Nur Ahmed, if you want to raise the question, then you can do so in connection with the subject under discussion.

Food Problem.

Mr. NUR AHMED: Sir, rice problem is a very serious problem in Bengal. There has been shortage of rice throughout Bengal in general and very acute shortage in Chittagong in particular. Sir, with your permission, I am reading out a statement made by the War Correspondent of the *Statesman* wherein he deals with Chittagong's food situation:—

"Chittagong's food situation is justifiably described as acute. Members of the essential services get rations or allowances, but the man in the street

is hard pushed for food. Rice, *dal* and cooking oil can be had at prices that are fantastic by peace-time index numbers. *Atta*, sugar and *ghee* are practically unobtainable. The price of vegetables has gone up by 400 per cent. Fuel is scarce. A price control system is in existence, but is not working out. It drives agriculturists to hoard their stocks which they sell sparingly on the open market. The cynics say that the police are still more keen on finding a seditious leaflet than unearthing a *cache* of grain. But the townspeople themselves show little disposition to try and make price control work. Lack of transport and the requirements of the armed forces in the area are two additional factors which make the task of those who are trying to solve Chittagong's food problem an unenviable one. It is to the credit of the public, however, that it has a shrewd idea where the difficulties lie. There is no spirit of carping criticism abroad in the town. The civil administration, despite its seeming failure, is held in high esteem."

Sir, these are the words of the War Correspondent of the *Statesman*. At the same time he praises the morale of the people of Chittagong. He says that in spite of the bombing of Chittagong, the people have maintained their morale intact. But, Sir, why is it that the conditions in Chittagong have aggravated so much? Some reasons have been given by the War Correspondent in his statement, and they are the transport difficulty and the military requirements, and there is another cause for this acute shortage which is that a number of men have come to Chittagong from Burma. Sir, lakhs of people have come to Chittagong from Akyab and Burma, and they are living there. The condition has become worse also on account of military supplies being sent to the war zone from Chittagong. In this connection, Sir, I must allude to a statement of the Hon'ble the Chief Minister. When this very question of rice supply and foodstuffs was being discussed in the September Session of the Assembly, the Chief Minister said that Government were fully aware of the acute rice situation in the country, and that everything possible was being done to meet it and that the Ministry were satisfied that all possible steps were taken. Since then about six months have passed and the situation in the country, specially in Chittagong, has become very grave. The people in Chittagong are literally starving and dying; they are living only on vegetables and that too is hardly available owing to the war supplies. They are practically subsisting on only one meal, but that one meal too is not available to all. Poor people of Chittagong are helping the war effort in every possible way at great risk of their lives, carrying war materials for the army, and are working with constant danger to their lives, but no care is being taken to feed these people. Also, thousands of people from Chittagong have gone to the war as seamen and serangs, but the families and children of these men are starving for want of rice and other foodstuffs. Rice in Chittagong is selling at 1½ seers or 1¼ seers the rupee. This is a very distressing situation and I appeal to Government to take note of the immense suffering of the people of Chittagong. Unless help is rendered to them immediately many thousands will die. Owing to the shortage of food, people in the Chittagong district are suffering from

malaria and other diseases. There is not a single house there where some of the members are not suffering from malaria or some other disease. Even the town of Chittagong is not immune from the effect of malaria. In Chittagong malaria was unknown; but now that fell disease has come to stay in the town also. The situation is very acute and serious. The District Magistrate and other officers try their best to cope with the situation, but they are helpless: they say there is no rice available and they are helpless in the matter. So I appeal to the Ministry to come to the rescue of the people of Chittagong. The Hon'ble Ministers themselves praised the people of Chittagong as brave more than once, and I hope they will see that these bravemen do not die of starvation. But rank starvation is staring them in the face. It is a pitiful sight to see these half-famished people. Any visitors who happen to visit their quarters know what a pitiable picture they present. I earnestly appeal to the present Ministry to do something to ameliorate their condition without delay.

I now come to the general situation. What is the cause of this critical situation? It is said that Bengal is self-sufficient in respect of rice production. In answer to a question, it was said very complacently by the Hon'ble Minister in charge that the province of Bengal was self-sufficient in respect of rice production. Very recently in answer to a question by our leader it was said that the shortage is only 10 per cent.; but before that another reply was given to the effect that the shortage was very little: so there is no consistency in the answers of the Hon'ble Minister. It was said, if there is a bumper crop, there should not be any shortage. Never in the history of Bengal, even in time of acute famine, the price of rice has risen so high. In this connection, Sir, I would refer to the book of Sir Azizul Haque, the ex-Speaker of the Bengal Legislative Assembly and now the High Commissioner for India, namely "Man Behind the Plough". In that book he quoted figures of the last ten years; he has also reproduced figures from the acreage and yield of the principal crops. He has shown that for the last ten years Bengal is always deficient in its food production. Sir, Bengal requires 500 million maunds of paddy annually and has produced only 340 million maunds of paddy. So, on an average it has a deficit of 160 million maunds per year. He sounded a note of warning that Bengal was a deficit area and efforts should be made to grow more food for the purpose of making Bengal self-sufficient in rice. That note of warning was uttered by no less a person than Sir Azizul Haque, the moderate of moderates, and that long before the war set in. But our Ministry did not take any notice of that warning. We also find from a report published by the Agricultural Marketing Adviser to the Government of India in October, 1941, that India is deficient in rice production. He has shown by figures of the last ten years that Bengal used to import 15 to 25 lakhs of tons of rice from Burma, Siam and Indo-China and that attempts should be made to increase the production of rice in India. That was in 1941, and no heed was taken of that report. No timely action was taken upon that.

Then, as regards the slogan of "Grow More Food". Well, that has remained only on paper. There was no heart-and-soul attempt to increase

the yield of paddy crop in Bengal. From a review made by the Hon'ble Sir Joginder Singh, a Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, at a Conference of Editors, we find that as a result of the "Grow More Food Campaign," there was an increase in acreage of paddy and millet from 73 to 75 million acres. No mention is made of Bengal. Central Provinces, Assam, Madras, Bihar and Orissa, every province has been mentioned, but Bengal is nowhere. Due to the failure of this "Grow More Food Campaign" we have been faced with an acute situation, and Mr. J. B. Ross very aptly said the other day that the situation was out of control. Every other country involved in the war has made something in the way of increasing its production of food, but not Bengal. Sir, it is an irony of fate that in England which is in a life-and-death struggle the price level has increased by only 21 per cent., whereas in India it has increased by 100 to 200 per cent. But, Sir, in spite of this state of affairs in the country the Ministers have been sleeping over this very important question of food. When they awoke from Rip Van Winklian sleep the situation had got already out of control.

Mr. PRESIDENT: You have exceeded your time. How long will you take?

Mr. NUR AHMED: Five minutes more.

Sir, I have given only one example of how food shortage in our country has been brought about, and I have shown that our Ministers are solely responsible for this state of things, and they did not take timely measure to increasing of rice production in Bengal.

Now, I would like to say a few words about the Government's system of food control. This system of food control has met with complete failure, because there has been no co-ordinated policy behind it. That this system of food control has failed has been admitted by the Hon'ble the Chief Minister himself. There are other reasons for the failure of this system. From the book published by the Economic Intelligence Department of the League of Nations regarding control of food prices in many centres, it appears that the control of food price without control of "production, supply and consumption" intensifies demand and creates black market hoarding. Government have controlled the prices of foodstuffs without first of all determining the sources of supply and production. There is also the cry of black market the existence of which the Government has not been able to trace so far. All these things combined together have led to the shortage of food throughout the length and breadth of this country. Sir, with these words, I support the motion moved by our leader so ably.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOUDHURY: Sir, the question of food has become the question of permanent importance with everybody inside this House and outside. Every day during this session the question is coming before the House in one form or another. My friend, Mr. Nur Ahmed, has rightly put it that the Ministers have been sleeping over this very

important question. Indeed, Sir, for the last one year we have been seeing that the administration has been sleeping and the Minister in charge is absent and the other Ministers also take very little interest in this very important matter of food, and this apathy on their part is so much apparent in their face that the debate on this subject bores them and they get restless. Really speaking, Sir, this attitude on their part has been responsible to a great extent for the position we have arrived at. For the last one year, during the whole of the year 1942 and some part of the year 1941, immediately the Japanese occupation of Indo-China, Siam and Burma was completed, everyone was apprehending serious consequences to this province, but the Ministers seem not to have been aware of this, nor have they busied themselves with the future that is coming over this province. For the whole of the year they tried every possible means to avoid sittings of the Legislature, they were shy and they were afraid to meet the public in discussion of the problem, because they had no programme for tackling the problem of food. Our Ministers have been reluctant to discuss this very important question with the people's representatives who know the conditions of the villages where millions and millions of people are living by their earnings as labourers and purchasing their foodstuffs which come from the stock of the surplus holders. They have never allowed the representatives of people in this House or elsewhere to have any knowledge of the problem that is facing the country. They have been purchasing rice from areas under denial policy, but they have not up till now given the people to understand the extent of the purchases they have made so far. There is also the question of supply to the deficit areas. Sir, everybody knows that Government has become the biggest holder of rice stock at present. But whether that is a fact is not known to anybody except the Ministers or to the departments concerned. But in the public interest they are not willing to give out what their stock is. We think, however, that there is no reason why this information is being withheld. If Government is actually withholding large stocks of rice as the country, the market and the people believe, then there would be a great pressure on the market against rise of prices and would keep down the price level to a reasonable extent because if the intention of Government is to rush down this purchase of rice stock in their hands when there is scarcity, there would be a tendency, an abnormal tendency, for the price of rice to rise beyond the reach of the people. Automatically there would be a check in the rise of the price. Therefore, this withholding of information in the name of the greater interest of the public has not been understood by us. The Ministers on the other hand have been doing everything possible to create a sense of frustration, a sense of scarcity and a sense of great danger facing the country. At one stage or another they have made wild statements, and at the beginning of this session an Hon'ble Minister told the House, as an extenuating circumstance against the charges that were brought against them, that the deficit was as great as 23 per cent. They want to say that the crisis is extremely great, so great indeed as to be beyond the power of the Ministry or of anybody else to devise a solution, and therefore the fate of the people is sealed and doomed and they must starve and

die. In reply to a question today it was said that the deficit as regards rice was only 10 per cent. Calculating on a certain consumption rate they have found out that our requirements on the import figures of the last three years' averages are 76 lakhs tons, but that the available stock so far as the requirements are concerned is 92 lakhs only, that is less by 16 lakh tons, which is 10 per cent. neither of 76 nor of 92. The Ministry considered this question of foodstuffs so important that they created a special portfolio and entrusted one of the ablest members of the Ministry with that portfolio and that Minister has been absent from this House except for a bare three or four days when we have brought this matter to the fore on the floor of the House by means of adjournment motions, questions, special motions, but there is no one who can give an answer proper to our questions. That is the departmental attitude, and as I have stated before they have avoided summoning the House for one reason or other when there was a cry on the part of the people for doing so, and they are even now showing an anxiety to get over this session as soon as possible so that the Legislature, at least this House, may not get another opportunity this year of bringing to their notice the real position in the country, thus blasting all future prospects of the poor people to get a morsel of bread or a mouthful of rice for some time to come, and that is the attitude of the Ministers. As I have said, the crisis is not due to natural causes, nor is it due to the present war situation: it is due to a great extent to the mishandling of the problem by the present Ministry. Only this morning we have been told in answer to a supplementary question that we are only short by 10 per cent.—in other words, 90 per cent. of the food required for the province is available and can be had. Are we at the end of the harvest time? Are we not at the beginning of the harvest? It is barely two months that the harvest is over. Therefore we have exhausted only 20 per cent. of the available stock of rice in the province. But how is it that the price has gone up four or five times? Mr. Nur Ahmed in course of his speech stated that at Chittagong rice is selling at 12 annas and 13 annas per seer! It is unheard of in the history of Bengal. The consequence of this is that a day labourer with an income of four or five annas a day, with a family to maintain, can hardly get half a meal a day: they are practically starving. You can very well imagine, Sir, what is the fate of these people. Barely 70 per cent. of the people can have a meal per head and you can very well visualise what is coming ahead. The present position has been created by accumulated factors and one of the main factors, as I have already said, is the mishandling of the food problem by the present Ministry. It was said in September that a new Department of Civil Supply was being inaugurated and with its inauguration greater and greater results were expected. But what are the achievements of that department—what are the achievements of the Minister in charge? Has the Ministry any policy? Is it any good bringing in officer after officer into the new department—is it any good importing Deputy Director after Deputy Director and changing the Director when the Ministry have no scheme? Is it not the primary function of the Ministry to evolve a scheme? Where is the scheme? The Department of Civil Supply is there for the

last 6 or 7 months; but what is the achievement of the department—a few shops here and there; 20, 30 or 40 shops in Calcutta where 2,000 shops are not able to meet the needs of the 20 lakhs of people. Here in Calcutta we have got a small number of shops to meet the needs of the whole population. These few shops are being run with the supply of Government—shops selected by Government; and selected by them for what reason is known to everybody: that is common knowledge. These are the achievements of the Department of Civil Supply. Are the Hon'ble Ministers not aware that in the houses of some of the principal Ministers articles on controlled prices are being sold? Are they not aware that articles are passing through the backdoor through their own men and proteges? Are they not aware that men and women in large numbers have to leave the queues without their rice after waiting for a long time on the plea that the stocks have been exhausted, after 11 o'clock, but that between 11 and 4 o'clock the same articles are sold by the same shopkeepers in black market? Are they not aware that the articles that are supplied through the Civil Supply Department to the shopkeepers selected by Government are sold in the black market between 11 and 4? Are they not aware that the prices of the articles supplied through the Civil Supply Department are debited to the revenues of the province? Do they not know that licences are given only to the proteges and favoured persons and supporters of the present Ministry for the distribution of articles into the area which is supposed to be deficit? My friend Dr. Kasiruddin Talukdar is very anxious to find that the Hon'ble Chief Minister is not hearing what I am saying. It is not perhaps necessary that he should hear what I am saying. Are they not aware that these licensees declare that the entire stock has been exhausted when actually the stock supplied by the Civil Supply Department has not been exhausted? Are they aware that paddy is being sold, paddy which had been brought with the authority of the Government and for which transport facilities had been given and all the monopolies that could be given to such undertakers, in the black markets? They have no policy. They started controlling prices from the months of September, October and November, fixed the prices at certain maximum and the Magistrates, courts and police were instructed to punish the profiteers. And at the same time the Director of Civil Supplies discovered that black markets are essential for us. We must tolerate the black markets, allow them to grow, encourage their growth! Are the Ministers aware that their own purchasers had gone into the villages, *hâts*, villages where rice was selling at Rs. 13 a maund and people were doing good business, these purchasers, these Government purchasing agents offered them Rs. 16 a maund and thus created a sense of fear in the minds of some and expectation in the minds of others? Fear, for there was a great scarcity and after two or three months the stocks would exhaust and the people would have to buy rice at a very high price or there might not be any rice at all, because big merchants from Calcutta had been purchasing rice at any price. Expectation for those classes of dealers who are profiteers and who could withhold stocks for a month or so in order that they could demand any price for rice. This is the direct result of want of policy

on the part of the Ministry so far as the handling of the food problem is concerned. Simultaneously in Calcutta two markets are running, some shops are being allowed to operate in two ways. Is it possible, Sir, to have a real and sensible solution of the problem when you have got side by side a shop which is selling rice at annas 3 or annas 4 and another shop demanding annas 12 for a seer of rice? Is it possible to solve the problem by simply having 20 shops and let the rest of the people remain under the protection and clutches of the black market operators? Is it Government's policy or is it Government's decision that the whole needs of Calcutta can be supplied by the few controlled shops that have been started by them? And then the Government cannot make available to these shops adequate supplies to meet the requirements of the whole population of Calcutta. This is, Sir, the problem of food and the problem of food is an everyday problem of the country which cannot be deferred by two or three days. Therefore, as I have said, these activities of Government have not only bungled the situation, they are even worse, these are merely sops and the Government, I say, Sir, has never been serious in solving this problem——

Mr. PRESIDENT: Mr. Chowdhury, your time is up.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Sir, may I get five minutes?

Mr. PRESIDENT: I would like to know what the Hon'ble the Leader of the House has got to say over the sitting time of the Lower House today.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: Sir, through oversight the Lower House is to meet at 3-15 p.m. today. Therefore, I desire that the House be adjourned now and Government promise to give the House another day for finishing its business.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I must say that it is very regrettable that on every occasion Government has to come forward with a request to adjourn this House earlier on the ground that the other House had been adjourned till an earlier time through oversight. However, as Government are prepared to give another day to finish our discussion, I think there should be no objection to our adjourning today at 3-15 p.m.

Mr. BANKIM CHANDRA DATTA: Let us know that day.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Sir, this sort of protracted discussion really takes away the essence of the discussion, and it is very uncomfortable and inconvenient to us.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: Let the day be fixed after tomorrow.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I quite appreciate the argument of the Leader of the Opposition that unless the discussion is allowed to be continued it ceases to have any effect. So the date should be fixed as early as possible for a continuation of this debate.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: We would like the 30th of this month for this purpose.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: That would be too late, for the gap would be too long. It should be as early before the 30th of March as possible.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Let it be Friday then.

Mr. PRESIDENT: May I suggest that let us continue this debate tomorrow and let the jute debate be taken up later on?

The House stands adjourned till 1-30 p.m. tomorrow.

Adjournment.

The Council then adjourned till 1-30 p.m. on Tuesday, the 23rd March, 1943.

Members absent.

The following members were absent from the meeting held on the 22nd March, 1943:—

(1) Rai Bahadur Keshab Chandra Banerjee.

(2) Khan Bahadur Rezzaqul Haider Chowdhury.

(3) Mr. Narendra Chandra Datta.

(4) Mr. Kamini Kumar Dutta.

(5) Khan Bahadur Alhadj Khwaja Muhammad Esmail.

(6) Mr. Kanai Lal Goswami.

(7) Mr. Mohamed Hossain.

(8) Khan Bahadur Muhammad Asaf Khan.

(9) Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan.

(10) Mr. Naresh Nath Mookerjee.

(11) Dr. Kumud Sankar Ray.

(12) Mr. Nagendra Narayan Ray.

(13) Mr. J. B. Ross.

(14) Rai Sahib Jatindra Mohan Sen.

(15) Raja Bhupendra Narayan Sinha Bahadur, of Nashipur.

BENGAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DEBATES

First Session, 1943—No. 18.

THE COUNCIL met in the Legislative Chamber of the Legislative Building, Calcutta, on Tuesday, the 23rd March, 1943, at 1-30 p.m., being the eighteenth day of the First Session of 1943, pursuant to section 62(2) (*a*) of the Government of India Act, 1935.

Mr. President (the Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY, K.C.I.E.) was in the Chair.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, my colleague the honourable the Leader of the House will perhaps be a little late in coming. So, may I suggest that the answers in his name be held over till he comes?

Mr. PRESIDENT: All right, but is he coming at all? Then the questions may be taken up at a later stage.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Thank you.

(Therefore questions Nos. 40, 55, and 61 were not taken up.)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Air raid alert in Chittagong.

85. Mr. NUR AHMED: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Civil Defence be pleased to state if it is a fact that no timely alert regarding the air raid on Chittagong Aerodrome on the 25th October, 1942, was given?

(*b*) If so, who is responsible for this?

(*c*) Is it a fact that the warning system by sirens is defective in Chittagong and no timely warning could be given on the first air raid in Chittagong on the 8th May last also?

(*d*) If so, do the Government propose to take immediate steps to make the warning system about air raid as efficient as possible? If not, why not?

MINISTER in charge of the CIVIL DEFENCE, PUBLIC HEALTH and LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu): I would point out for the information of the honourable member that no Minister is in charge of Civil Defence in this Province.

With regard to the questions themselves, I regret that for reasons of security it is not possible to give the information asked for, but the points made by the honourable member have been noted.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Have those points not been forwarded to the proper authorities, but have been simply noted by him?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I am afraid I cannot say anything more.

High price of rice, etc., at Jessore.

86. Mr. K. C. ROY CHOWDHURY: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department be pleased to state if he is aware that daily necessary commodities are sold at prices as shown below, by the shopkeepers in Mitapurhat, Naldi Bazar and Brahmandongahat, police-station Lohagora, and in Pazarkhalihat and Hathodanga Bazar, police-station Narail, in the district of Jessore:—Kerosene at Re.1-4 per seer, mustard oil at Re. 1-4 per seer, salt at 4 annas per seer, sugar at Re. 1 per seer, flour at 14 annas per seer, coarse rice at Rs. 10-8 to Rs. 11-8 per maund?

(*b*) Is it a fact that Mr. Indu Bhusan Sarkar, Assistant Secretary, Bengal Provincial Trade Union Congress, addressed a memorial to the Hon'ble Minister on the 9th January, 1943, through the District Magistrate, Jessore, and Subdivisional Officer, Narail, making serious allegations of profiteering against the shopkeepers of those localities as regards high price?

(*c*) If the reply to clause (*b*) be in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister in charge be pleased to enlighten the House what were the contents of the said memorial?

(*d*) If answers to clauses (*a*) and (*b*) be in the affirmative, what action has been taken or is intended to be taken by the Hon'ble Minister in this matter?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN (on behalf of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) No complaint, except in the shape of the memorial referred to in (*b*), has been received.

(*b*) Yes.

(*c*) A copy of the memorial is laid in the Library.

(*d*) The Subdivisional Officer, Narail, has personally investigated the matter. The failure of the public to lodge specific complaints or to substantiate them by evidence has made it impossible to take effective action. The prices of these commodities have been fixed and local supervisory committees have been set up to facilitate action against profiteers.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the Police is empowered to take cognizance of the offence of profiteering and other things?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I think they are.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: What was the reason for not asking the Police to collect evidence for substantiating the complaints?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: No complaint was made to the Subdivisional Officer and unless the Subdivisional Officer is directly informed of these complaints how can he remove the grievances?

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: In cognizable cases why the Police by their own initiative did not take cognizance of the cases and informed the Subdivisional Officer?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I am not definite whether the Police informed the matter to the Subdivisional Officer or not. But from the memorial it is evident that the Subdivisional Officer tried his utmost but no evidence was brought to his notice and no definite complaint was made to him: that is the difficulty.

Supply of foodstuff in Chittagong.

87. Mr. NUR AHMED: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department be pleased to state what measures have been taken by the Government of Bengal to ensure regular supply of daily rations to the poor people living in the town of Chittagong after repeated air raids in Chittagong at the controlled price?

(*b*) How many relief centres have been opened in Chittagong town for supply of foodstuff and other necessaries of life and who are in charge of these centres and how much rice, kerosene, *dal*, sugar, salt, flour, etc., have been sold at controlled rate by each of these centres up to December, 1942?

(*c*) Is it a fact that many persons do not get rice, etc., from centres at these relief shops owing to overcrowding and lack of control over the owners of these centres?

(*d*) Do Government propose to introduce ration card system in Chittagong?

(*e*) Is it a fact that even coarse rice is being sold at Chittagong town in January, 1943, at 3 to 3½ seers per rupee?

(*f*) If so, what steps have been taken by the Government to supply adequate quantity of rice to Chittagong?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN (on behalf of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) To ensure regular supply of rice, two local mills are supplied with paddy requisitioned from the hoarders in the mufassal areas. Milled rice is sold at 5 seers a rupee through the agencies of reliable persons.

(*b*) Of the 37 relief centres, one is managed by Government and the rest by reliable public workers. One hundred and seventy-one bags (342 maunds) of rice are being daily distributed through these relief centres. It is not possible to give a detailed account of all the commodities sold in these stores.

(*c*) No, not at present. It is however possible that owing to the closing down of markets after air raids the stock of one or two relief centres became insufficient at the moment to meet demands.

(*d*) It is under consideration.

(*e*) No. Coarse rice is sold at 5 seers a rupee.

(*f*) Government are taking all possible steps to ensure adequate supplies by mobilising local resources and obtaining supplies from outside sources.

Mr. NUR AHMED: Arising out of answer (*a*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that these 37 relief centres do not supply rice for many days—some time for over a fortnight—for want of proper supply of rice?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: That occasionally happens at a time when the flow of supply is not adequate.

Mr. NUR AHMED: Arising out of (*a*), is it a fact that many of these so-called reliable dealers sell rice at higher price surreptitiously and numerous complaints have been made to the District Officer?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I shall make enquiries in the matter.

Mr. NUR AHMED: Arising out of (*c*), is it a fact that rice is being sold at present in Chittagong at two seers per rupee and sometimes at one and a half seer per rupee?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: The information of the department available was of a date when the price was not so high; but the bazar price of rice has become very high at present and it may be as high as the honourable member has said: I shall however make enquiries if the honourable member so desires.

Mr. NUR AHMED: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to make enquiries in the matter?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Yes.

Food supply.

88. Mr. SHRISH CHANDRA CHAKRAVERTI: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) what arrangement Government have made to ensure the food supply to the people of Bengal throughout the period of the war;

(*b*) what steps have been taken to bring down the abnormal prices of essential foodstuffs, viz., rice, *atta*, flour, *dal*, oil and *ghee*, which have gone up nearly four times as compared to the usual prices prevailing before the war; and

(*c*) whether Government contemplates the formation of a Committee of both official and non-official from both the houses of the Legislature with a view to stopping effectively the excessive profiteering and hoarding of goods?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN (on behalf of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) and (*b*) The various steps that Government have taken, with varying measures of success,

to ensure an easy and steady flow of essential commodities are too numerous to mention. It will suffice to say that the twin objects of Government's policy have been—

(*i*) the procurement of supplies from other provinces, with the help of the Governments of those provinces and Central Control authorities, as in the case of wheat and sugar; and

(*ii*) the equitable distribution of the available supplies through a system of permits, controlled shops, licensing of merchants and so forth.

In the case of rice, the main objective of Government's policy is to obtain control over the rice markets of this Province through regulated purchase of paddy and rice in some of the rice-growing areas of the Province, and the utilisation of these reserves to regulate the Calcutta and the mufassal markets. To this end, Government have already embarked on large-scale buying in a number of districts, and have controlled the movement of grain from these and other areas, with a view to preventing speculative and competitive buying.

(*c*) No.

Mr. SHRISH CHANDRA CHAKRAVERTI: Arising out of (*b*) (*ii*), will the Hon'ble Minister please let us know the number of controlled shops and the number of licences issued to the merchants for the purpose mentioned therein?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: The number of controlled shops in Calcutta is 140 and as regards the number of licences issued to the merchants, I cannot say that off-hand.

Mr. SHRISH CHANDRA CHAKRAVERTI: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state what is the procedure by which the merchants get their licences and what are the terms for the licences?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: The big merchants are now selected by the Trades Tribunal, set up for the purpose; as regards details, I ask for notice.

Khan Sahib FARIDUDDIN AHMED: Is the Government satisfied with the number of controlled shops, namely, 140, for the whole of Calcutta?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: No.

Khan Sahib FARIDUDDIN AHMED: Does the Government propose to increase the number of controlled shops sufficiently?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Yes.

Khan Sahib FARIDUDDIN AHMED: What is the number of controlled shops the Government is going for?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Government will increase the number of shops as far as possible.

Khan Sahib FARIDUDDIN AHMED: Has the Government any scheme in this regard?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Yes; the scheme is being drawn up.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Has the Government any idea of the total number of shops that would be required for the whole of Calcutta?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: That will be decided after certain enquiries are made.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Has the Government any definite idea as to how to provide food for the entire population of Calcutta?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Yes.

Mr. SHRISH CHANDRA CHAKRAVERTI: Arising out of (*b*) (*iv*), Government has stated that "they have already embarked on large-scale buying in a number of districts and have controlled the movement of grain from these and other areas, with a view to preventing speculative and competitive buying". So, will the Government let us know what is the quantity of rice they have already purchased up to date and when that rice is expected to be released in the market for general consumption and how?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Government are purchasing rice from wherever they are available, but in the public interest Government do not want to disclose the quantity of rice purchased.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state how their task will be affected if they disclose the quantities? What is the public interest that will be affected?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: That is a matter of opinion.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Is the Government aware that as a result of purchase of rice by Government agents, the price of rice has been seriously affected in mufassil markets?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Yes, temporarily it might have gone up but it will subside afterwards.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: What is the idea of Government when the price of rice is expected to subside?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: As soon as Government get supplies from the neighbouring provinces, that is, very soon.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: How many days, how many weeks or how many years it will take for the price of rice to come down?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: On a point of order, Sir. Does not the question smack of cross-examination?

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: I think the Hon'ble Ministers are not afraid of cross-examinations. They are accustomed to them.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Will the Hon'ble Minister make it a point to enquire into the allegation that Government agents are purchasing large quantities of rice, pushing up the prices and making it impossible for the local people to buy any rice and then disposing of a part of it for their own profit elsewhere?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Yes, I shall enquire into the matter.

Mr. KRISHNA CHANDRA ROY CHOWDHURY: Is it not a fact that the Government of India announced yesterday that transport of rice from Orissa has already begun by wagons?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Yes; but I cannot say from which province. The fact is that already huge quantities of rice have been purchased and the Government of India is arranging transport as early as possible.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Will the Hon'ble Minister kindly disclose what quota the Government have fixed for purchase from each district?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I ask for notice. Perhaps no quota has been fixed as regards purchase of rice from any district.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that irrespective of the quantities of surplus rice in a district, the agents have been authorised to buy any quantity of rice?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: The agents will purchase from stocks in a district as available, and if there be any deficit in that district, certainly the Government will take the responsibility of transmitting rice to that district.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Is it the policy of Government to buy rice, push up price and then bring it to Calcutta and send it back again after some time?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: No, that is not the policy of Government.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Is the Government aware that it is due to the activities of their rice-purchasing agents that the price of rice is beng shot up abnormally?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: The rise in the price of rice is not due to that but it is the effect of the control of price.

Food supply to hospitals.

89. Mr. RANAJIT PAL CHOWDHURY (on behalf of Dr. Kumud Sankar Roy): Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce, Labour and Industries Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether Government are aware of the difficulties of the hospitals and other charitable institutions, specially non-officials, in getting supplies of foodstuffs;

(*b*) whether it is a fact that authorities controlling supplies do not issue permit to these hospitals and institutions to enable them to obtain supplies at controlled rates;

(*c*) whether Government are aware that the non-official hospitals and charitable institutions find it impossible in many cases to obtain the necessary supplies even at prices much above the controlled rates;

(*d*) if the answer to parts (*a*), (*b*) or (*c*) be in the affirmative, do Government contemplate adopting measures to remove the difficulties in the very near future; if so, what steps do they propose to take;

(*e*) if Government are aware of the scarcity of coal and coke in the present market and the difficulty experienced by non-official hospitals and other charitable institutions in getting supplies of the same; and

(*f*) if Government contemplate removing this difficulty in the very near future; if so, in what way?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN (on behalf of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) No. Within the limits of supplies under our control, as many hospitals as possible were included in our list of priority consumers to whom supplies at controlled rates were made available.

(*c*) No.

(*d*) Yes, by making supplies of essential foodstuffs available at controlled rates in the market generally.

(*e*) No. There is no scarcity of coal and coke in the market at present.

(*f*) Does not arise.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: On a point of order, Sir. We understood that the Nawab Bahadur of Dacca was absent on indisposition and the answers to questions appearing in his name were therefore read out by one of his colleagues Mr. Barman who has been deputising for the Nawab Bahadur. But although we find the Nawab Bahadur in the Chamber just now, we find that the answers are still being given by Hon'ble Mr. Barman. Our information goes that the Hon'ble Mr. P. N. Banerjee is now the Minister in charge of Civlil Supplies which includes Food, but he too is not answering these questions.

Mr. PRESIDENT: This is an arrangement which has been made by the Ministers among themselves. If therefore one of their colleagues deputises for the Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur of Dacca, he is perfectly entitled to do so.

(The questions and answers were then read.)

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Sir, may I rise again on the point of order, although you have already given a decision against it? When something in print stands in the name of any member and that member is present in the House, then he generally reads it. That is the ordinary procedure and I think that it applies to the Hon'ble Ministers also. So will not the Hon'ble the Nawab Bahadur of Dacca follow the same procedure?

Mr. PRESIDENT: I understood that the Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur was indisposed and one of his colleagues was deputed to reply to the questions on his behalf. I take it that Mr. Barman is better posted with the replies than the Nawab Bahadur.

Mr. KADER BAKSH: The new Food Minister also is present.

Import of foodstuff into Bengal.

90. Mr. RANAJIT PAL CHOWDHURY: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce, Labour and Industries Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether it is a fact that an embargo has been put on the exportation into Bengal of certain foodstuffs from some of the neighbouring provinces;

(*b*) if so, the names of the particular foodstuffs so prohibited from each particular province and the period for which such prohibition will last;

(*c*) whether a considerable number of residents of those offending provinces sojourn and earn their livelihood in the Province;

(*d*) if so, whether our Government will prohibit sale of foodstuffs to those residing, from our Provincial Supply Depots; and

(*e*) whether our Government will also forfeit export of rice, tea, jute products, mustard oil and other products of our Province to those provinces?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN (on behalf of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) A statement is laid on the Table. The embargoes have been imposed *sine die*. Permits for exports are however issued by the Provincial Governments concerned.

(*c*) Yes. But the word "offending" should not have been used.

(*d*) No.

(*e*) A ban on the export of rice and paddy from Bengal and on the export of mustard oil from Calcutta already exists. Restrictions on the export of the other commodities are not necessary or desirable in the present circumstances.

Statement referred to in reply to question No. 90.

Province.	Commodities on the export of which an embargo has been imposed.	Remarks.
Bihar ..	Rice, paddy, salt, sugar-candy, *ghee*, butter, gram, pulses, mustard oil and mustard seed.	The Government of Bihar have agreed to allow export of 40,000 maunds of paddy into Bengal between January and April, 1943, and about 54,000 maunds of pulses every month for the next two months.
Orissa ..	Rice and paddy ..	The Government of Orissa have agreed to release two lakh maunds of rice to Director of Civil Supplies, and also to issue export permits to many Bengal merchants who had already purchased rice in Orissa.
Assam ..	Rice, husked or unhusked	Ten thousand maunds of rice have been so far promised by the Government of Assam.
United Provinces.	Foodgrains ..	The United Provinces Government have recently released a considerable quantity of *dal*, *bajra* and *jawar* in favour of importers of Bengal.

Standard cloth.

91. Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN (on behalf of Mr. Mesbahuddin Ahmed): Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce, Labour and Industries Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) what *quality* of the standard cloth will be available for (1) Bengal and (2) Mymensingh district during the next 3 months and in the course of the current year; and

(*b*) what price will be charged for such standard cloth?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN (on behalf of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) Apparently the honourable member wants to know the "quantity" and not the "quality". Out of the January allotment, the total of which for Bengal is 1,610 bales (30 lakh yards), Mymensingh will receive 251 bales. Railway receipts for 399 bales have so far been received by us. The allotment to Bengal for the quarter February to April, 1943, is 4,000 bales (75 lakh yards). An additional allotment of 77 lakh yards is expected for April but no final order has yet been received. No allotment out of the quota for February to April has been made as yet. Mymensingh is however likely to get a share in nearly the same proportion.

I have no information as to what will be Bengal's quota during the remaining part of the year after April.

(*b*) The ex-mill prices for the January allotment only are known and given below. The consumer is likely to get a pair at 2 annas 6 pies to 3 annas higher than the ex-mill prices.

Variety and ex-mill price.

(1) Dhoti 9 cubits × 39 inches—Rs.3-1-5½p. per pair.
(2) Dhoti 9 cubits × 44 inches—Rs.3-7-6¼p. per pair.
(3) Saree 9 cubits × 39 inches—Rs.3-3-5¾p. per pair.
(4) Saree 10 cubits × 44 inches—Rs.4-1-¼p. per pair.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Has this Government represented to the Government of India to increase their quota for Bengal because 77 lakhs of yards are hardly sufficient for the population of Bengal?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Bengal represented to India asking for a very big allotment, but that Government were pleased to give us only the allotment that has been indicated in the answer.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Is the Government considering the question of supplying standard cloths or otherwise to the "indigents" who have no money to pay even for cloths at this reduced rate?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Government will consider that matter.

Chittagong Municipality.

92. Khan Sahib ABDUL AZIZ: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be pleased to state on what date the Chittagong Municipality was superseded?

(*b*) Has any money been advanced by the Government of Bengal to the Chittagong Municipality after its supersession?

(*c*) If so, what is the total amount thus advanced up to the 30th September, 1942, and for what purposes and on what conditions was the money advanced?

(*d*) How many municipal officers and employees including primary school teachers, mistresses, maid-servants of this superseded municipality have been dismissed or discharged by the Special Officer after its supersession up to this date?

(*e*) Out of these dismissed or discharged employees and officers, how many are Moslems and how many are non-Moslems?

(*f*) Is it a fact that a large number of tea-stall holders who are poor Moslems have been prosecuted? If so, what is their number and why have they been prosecuted?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: (*a*) The 6th April, 1942.

(*b*) and (*c*) Yes. An advance of Rs.1,50,000 bearing interest at 3¾ per cent. per annum and repayable according to a scheme approved by Government, was paid for the maintenance of the essential services of the municipality.

(*d*) and (*e*) A statement is laid on the Table.

(*f*) After the supersession of the Municipality, the officer-in-charge prosecuted, under section 420 of the Bengal Municipal Act, all owners of unlicensed tea-stalls irrespective of creed. The total number of persons prosecuted is 225.

Statement referred to in the reply to question No. 92.

Total number of employees discharged or dismissed ..	170
Muslims	120
Non-Muslims	50

Khan Bahadur ABDUL HAMID CHOWDHURY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what was the respective number of Muslim employees before the supersession of the Municipality?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I ask for notice.

Khan Bahadur ABDUL HAMID CHOWDHURY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if there are still any Muslim employees in the Municipality after the supersession?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I presume so.

Cyclone and flood in the Diamond Harbour subdivision.

93. Mr. RANAJIT PAL CHOWDHURY: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether he has considered the extent of affliction and distress of the people by the recent flood and cyclone in Diamond Harbour subdivision; if so, whether he has it in contemplation to defer the realisation of rent, revenue and taxes as well as abeyance of rent and revenue sales in the affected areas till things return to normal conditions;

(*b*) whether any loan or advance to the homeless people for purpose of reconstruction of their huts has been granted in the distressed areas;

(*c*) if so, when it was granted and to what extent; and

(*d*) if not, the reason or reasons for which such grants have not been made as has been done in Midnapore?

MINISTER in charge of the REVENUE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee): (*a*) An enquiry is being made to ascertain the extent and nature of damages done by the flood and cyclone with a view to consider the question of remission or suspension of land revenue. Meanwhile no coercive measure is being taken for the realisation of the arrear demands.

(*b*) Yes.

(*c*) Rs.1,20,000 sanctioned on the 13th January, 1943.

(*d*) Does not arise.

Point of privilege and enquiry.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: Sir, may I rise on a small point of privilege relating to a question of which I gave notice? About 15 days ago I gave notice of a question concerning the observance of communal ratio in the matter of appointments in the department directly in charge of the Hon'ble President, that is the Council Department. At that time you were not in office, Sir, and the Deputy President was carrying on the work of the President in the absence of a President. I have not been informed yet as to the fate of that question—whether it has been accepted or will be accepted or not and at what stage it is now: I want information on the point. I think, Sir, probably the Deputy President who was then acting on behalf of the President may be able to enlighten us in the matter.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The question is just now before me. I am considering the matter as to whether a question relating to the administrative department under the direct charge of the President should be admitted. A question of this nature requires careful consideration and I am consulting the Central Legislature Procedure in the matter. I hope to be in a position to give a reply in a day or two if the honourable member would come to my Chamber.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: Thank you, Sir.

Public Accounts Committee.

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: On a matter of enquiry, Sir. A few days ago I wanted information regarding the working of the Public Accounts Committee and you, Sir, told me that you would inform the House at an early date after consulting the Finance Minister.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I mentioned the matter to the Finance Minister: he said he would take up the question. But probably he is too busy at the present moment and has not been able to take up the matter. I shall remind him about it.

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: Thank you, Sir.

Motion on Food Problem.

Mr. PRESIDENT: When we adjourned yesterday Mr. Hamidul Huq Chowdhury was in possession of the House. But I find he is absent now, so I call upon Mr. Lalit Chandra Das, who has a motion similar to that of Khan Bahadur Saiyed Muazzamuddin Hosain, to speak.

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: Sir, I had a similar motion to that of Khan Bahadur Saiyed Muazzamuddin Hosain and I wanted to move it. But as you have called upon me to speak on the motion of the Leader of the Opposition I am doing so.

The other day my honourable friend Mr. McFarlane remarked, and I think very justly remarked, that the food problem is not peculiar to Bengal. It is a problem for all the provinces in India: it is a problem for the whole world. He further observed that no Government has yet been very successful in dealing with this question.

Now, Sir, the Leader of the Opposition in dealing with this motion before the House lost sight of this basic proposition. He ignored the fact (Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Certainly not) that it is not a problem which cannot be satisfactorily solved by any Government in the world. On the contrary, as I listened to his speech very attentively I detected in his speech—which otherwise was a good one—a desire to say "resign" and "resign" from the Ministry. Well, Sir, that is the way in which he wants to deal with the food problem. Certainly, that should not be the spirit in which discussion of food problem should be carried on. It is undoubtedly a very serious problem which concerns not only the members of the Opposition but it concerns us equally also and the people of Bengal as well. This problem can only be solved through the united efforts of all. Let the members of the Opposition suggest solutions and if Government do not act up to them then and then only can the Opposition members criticise the Government in this spirit and not before that. Mr. McFarlane has spoken of the disappearance of the good crop of 1941. In his speech he laid the blame principally upon the hoarders and speculators being responsible for the present state of affairs. I do not believe that hoarding and speculation give the whole explanation of the present situation. It no doubt is responsible to some extent but not wholly.

In this connection, I would refer to certain things which sprang up in the meantime. There was scarcity of food in Ceylon. Sir Baron Jaytilak, Minister of Ceylon, came over to India and requested the Government of India to help in the matter. Government of India, Sir, acceded to his request. But how can the Government of India help Ceylon unless it be with the help of the provinces? The Provincial Governments are but mere subordinate branches of the Government of India and Bengal happens to be the biggest rice-producing province in the whole of India. So, Bengal had to export thousands and thousands of bags of rice to Ceylon and this was done in spite of the wishes of the Government of Bengal. There are other things to mention in this connection. Quite recently, within two or three months, the agents of the Government of India exported rice from the port of Calcutta, I believe without the consent of the Government of Bengal, sufficient quantities of rice to other places outside India. I think some clue could be found to the disappearance of the good crop of 1941 if we investigate these exports of rice to outside India. These exports should not have been allowed at all. But I would ask the Leader of the Opposition to say whether the position would have been different if the Muslim League would have been in power. Suppose Sir Nazimuddin would have been at the head of the Government at this moment and if Lord Linlithgow would have said "Well, Sir Nazimuddin, give me some rice for Ceylon", would Sir Nazimuddin have courage to refuse the supply?

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: On a point of order, Sir. Is it permissible for the honourable member to mention the name of Sir Nazimuddin who is not present in the House?

Mr. PRESIDENT: I was just going to point out that. Mr. Das, you should not mention the name of any particular individual.

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: Sir, I was mentioning the name of Sir Nazimuddin because he happens to be the Leader of the Muslim League Party. However, Sir, in such circumstances the Muslim League could not have done better. For, after all the Bengal Government is but a subordinate branch of the Government of India however much we may vaunt about our provincial autonomy.

Then, Sir, Mr. McFarlane, in his speech, stated that the "Grow More Food" campaign had failed miserably and observed that the Department of Agriculture did not do its duty properly. I think, Sir, there is much to be said with respect to the view that that department could have done much better. But certainly it cannot be said that the Department of Agriculture failed altogether in this respect.

Sir, if you look at the figures, it will be apparent that the Ministers have done something in the way of making the "Grow More Food" campaign a success. It will appear from the report of the Paddy Committee that in 1936-37, 21,992,500 acres of lands were under cultivation and in 1942-43, 23,164,000 acres were under cultivation. So between 1937 and 1942 1,171,500 acres more were brought under cultivation. The yield of crop in 1942 came down very miserably, it being 6,938,800 tons of rice only. But this is due to the destruction of crops by cyclone and other natural causes. Many of the rice-producing districts in Bengal have failed to come up to the mark. For instance in Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Midnapore and some parts of the 24-Parganas, rice was destroyed by cyclone, pests and other natural causes, and so the yield of rice in these places did not come up to expectation and hence is the deficit of rice throughout the whole province. The total quantity of rice required in Bengal is estimated at 9,266,800 tons. So the deficit of rice in Bengal is of 2,328,000 tons. Now, more lands should be brought under cultivation by the Department of Agriculture. With respect to this, the Minister in charge has already said that he intends to set up a department for this purpose and that he has been doing all that has been possible for him to do in the course of 15 or 16 months that he has been in office. Now, as regards intensive production of rice by means of improved method of cultivation and better seeds, this is also being tried by the Department of Agriculture. Sir, there has been some reduction also in areas under jute cultivation. Nothing more could be done. The Department of Agriculture is a very important department and if it works well it can inure to the benefit to the people.

Sir, the Leader of the Opposition has charged the Government with failure in the matter of food problems. Not merely the Leader of the Opposition but also others, such as my honourable friends, Mr. Nur Ahmed and Mr. Hamidul Huq Choudhury have spoken in the same vein, *viz.*, that

Government have failed miserably and that they have allowed the situation to drift. Sir, I do not think that the charge is wholly correct and that there has been such a thing as drifting. It would appear, Sir, that the Government of Bengal have started a department, called the Directorate of Civil Supplies. The persons who have been placed at the head of this department should not have been placed there at all. But I associate myself with the remark made by my friend, Mr. McFarlane, that it is not the fault of the particular gentleman who is put at the head of the department but it is the fault of the appointing authority. So the Ministers cannot be held responsible for the bungling that has been done by the Department of Civil Supplies, and there is no doubt about the fact that if the Directorate of Civil Supplies had been successful to the extent expected, then there would not have been such a situation as it is now.

So far as the province of Bengal is concerned, it is dependent for some of its foodstuffs upon provinces beyond the boundaries of Bengal, say, for *dal*, *atta*, sugar, oil and salt, which are articles which have got to be imported from outside and this too is dependent very much upon transport. There are undoubtedly transport difficulties and these transport difficulties had to be solved with the help of the Government of India. There was a time, Sir, when the price of coal was Rs. 5 per maund and that was undoubtedly a very difficult time. But the Government of Bengal tried to relieve the situation and the Government of India too came to their rescue by supplying help to solve the transport difficulty. And that is why we have been able to get coal now at one rupee and six annas a maund, and it is very necessary that the Government of Bengal should remain in a position to study the situation. At the same time it must be said that, even though we are getting *dal*, sugar and other things from outside Bengal, their prices have reached a prohibitive degree and the Ministry in Bengal should be ever watchful that there may not be any difficulty again with regard to transport. They must always remain in correspondence with the Government of India who should come to their rescue whenever the situation comes to such a pass that it cannot be borne any longer; at the same time one basic fact must be recognised and that is that the price of rice has risen to a phenomenal degree. In August the price of rice per maund varied from Rs. 8 to Rs. 10, but the price now ruling is Rs. 24 or Rs. 25, which must be said to be every phenomenal. I think that several causes have contributed to this. The first cause that strikes me is that there have been military purchases to meet the needs of the military, and I believe such military purchases have been made to meet the needs of the military within the Chittagong Division and it is not therefore surprising to have heard from my honourable friend Mr. Nur Ahmed that in Chittagong rice was selling at 1½ seers or 1¼ seers to the rupee. Now, Sir, there have also been heavy Government purchases to control the price and also for the purpose of distribution; there have also been purchases by traders and merchants, purchases by the wealthy section of the people to make some provision for some months ahead; there has also been hoarding and speculation and also maldistribution and stoppage of the movement of rice from one district to

another. There has also been an inflation of the currency to an unprecedented extent. And on the top of all this and in addition to this there has been wide publication of the heated discussions now going on with regard to the food problem. All these several causes have contributed to this phenomenal rise in the price of rice. I am however of opinion that while it is urgent that Government must purchase stocks of rice in sufficient quantities for the purpose of meeting the deficit and controlling their price and helping the distribution but, Sir, Government was wrong in making these purchases within the province in view of the fact that this province was running 25 per cent. short of its requirement of rice. Mr. Vigor, the new Food Adviser of the Government of India, has given his opinion as a result of his examination of the problem for the last three weeks that there is no real serious deficiency of food in India as a whole with regard to rice or wheat and that there need be no alarm at all. Crops of millet and wheat are good this year and may well supplant rice areas for food. This being the situation, Sir, ordinary commonsense would have dictated that the authorities at the head of the Civil Supplies Directorate should have sought for their stocks of rice and wheat and millet from beyond the boundaries of Bengal rather than from within.

Sir, I may say in this connection that it is beyond any doubt that steps will be taken by the Government of Bengal to stop export. But there should not be any delay in doing so. The House will be surprised to know that even in February last—only a month ago—export of rice was permitted: that should not have been done. It was said in reply to a question put by Mr. Humayun Kabir by the Hon'ble Minister for Commerce and Labour that rice was exported from the port of Calcutta in February, 1943—that 82·25 tons of rice were exported even in February last when there was already acute shortage. So what is most important is that Government should at once find out means to import rice and other articles of food from beyond the boundary of Bengal and this should be done under strict Government supervision—food should be purchased from the surplus districts. Inter-district trade should be allowed under strict Government supervision. Government, Sir, might assume power by legislation, if necessary, for the purpose of controlling the price and preventing hoarding and speculation and compete with the traders by importing food from abroad through the agency of the Regional Commissioner appointed by the Government of India. Till then there should be rationing—rationing in principal cities and in district towns and also in industrial areas not excluding the rural areas. I consider it necessary to establish an effective link between the people and the Government for the solution of the food problem by securing the active co-operation of the union boards. These boards will be able to infuse the necessary confidence in peasants, remove the fear of non-availability of foodstuffs, assess the annual requirements of food in their respective areas and advise the Government in respect of supply and other cognate matters. Nothing should be done to sacrifice the interests of the primary producers who constitute the bulk of the country's population to satisfy a vociferous and clamorous minority—the fixed wage-earners. Not

only every scrap of cultivable land should be brought under plough but all possible efforts must be made to improve the yield of the land already under cultivation and in this the help of the union boards will be of great value.

Now, Sir, before I come to the end of my speech I would draw the attention of the Government to page 110 of the report of the Bengal Paddy and Rice Enquiry Committee, Volume II—and I would request the Hon'ble Minister to take particular note of this quotation—where it is stated—.

"The example of Japan is illuminating. Japan has over seven and a half million acres under rice, the crop ranging annually from 7,580,000 tons to 8,260,000 tons. The annual consumption is estimated to be about 9,260,000 tons. The deficit is to be met by importation. The aim of the Japanese Government is to maintain rice at a price which will be fair to the farmers and which will at the same time not press heavily on the labourer in the factory. The Japanese Government is itself a buyer of rice on a large scale. It likes to have in its own warehouses about 680,000 tons at the end of each harvest season——

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, order. Mr. Das, you have already spoken for more than 20 minutes and you should finish your speech now.

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: Will you kindly allow me three minutes?

Mr. PRESIDENT: Yes; but I hope you will finish your speech within three minutes.

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: The report then goes on to say—"This practice which received legislative sanction in 1921 enables it to control the price in the succeeding year. If the harvest is good and the price falls, it buys from the Japanese farmer and carries over a larger quantity against a bad year; then when the harvest is poor, it sells its stocks to the industrial labourers at a fair rate——.

Mr. NUR AHMED: May I know, Sir, from what book the honourable member is reading?

Mr. LALIT CHANDRA DAS: I am reading out from page 110 of the Report of the Bengal Paddy and Rice Enquiry Committee.

"To assist it in its activities, the Japanese Government regulates import. If the stocks in the country, in the hands of private traders and in its own warehouses, are too small the tariff on imports is lifted altogether, if a moderate quantity of imports is necessary to keep stocks in the country up to the standard required, a customs duty which in 1927 was approximately Rs. 23 a ton is levied; if the stocks in the country are ample, then import is prohibited. This is how Japan maintains the price level of rice. The example of other countries for maintaining a fair price of the main crop may be profitably followed; in Egypt, £13,000,000 have been spent by Government in purchasing cotton which is stored in the warehouses of Alexandria awaiting a purchaser; in Canada huge quantities of wheat are stored by the wheat pool in the hope that prices will rise; in the United

States the Government has created a fund of over 130 crores of rupees from which advances are made to farmers to enable them to hold up their crops till market values advance."

Lastly, if the Government of Bengal follow this example in future there will be no difficulty with respect to the food problem in Bengal.

Mr. SHRISH CHANDRA CHAKRAVERTI: Mr. President, Sir, no arguments are needed from me to show that the food problems of Bengal have come to a crisis and the food problems are the most vital problems of Bengal at the present moment and any Government, national or otherwise, to be worth its name must before everything else find food for the people. I have heard with great pleasure the peroration of my honourable friend Mr. Lalit Chandra Das and his able advocacy on behalf of the Government. I was also interested in his academical discussion which was more befitting in a class room than in this Legislative Chamber and specially when people of Bengal are crying for food and are dying of starvation.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, order. Mr. Chakraverti, we have barely 65 minutes time left today. The Hon'ble Minister says he will take about 20 minutes to reply. Then the mover of the motion has a right of reply and again the Hon'ble Minister would reply. So, I request you to finish your speech in five minutes. I have more than five speakers on the list.

Mr. SHRISH CHANDRA CHAKRAVERTI: I shall obey your instruction, Sir.

Sir, the Nawab Bahadur of Dacca declared on the floor of this House that they failed to tackle the food problem of the province for various reasons and also the Hon'ble the Chief Minister stated elsewhere that the Ministry being sandwiched between the Governor and the permanent Government officials could not function as they desired. Since Mr. Pinnell took charge of the Department of Civil Supplies price of rice shot up from Rs. 7 or Rs. 8 to Rs. 25. Controlled shops which are intended to cater food do not serve the purpose. Every morning there is a long queue before a controlled shop. We hear some of the shops are not opened long after the people have formed a very long queue saying that supplies had not been obtained up to that time. Some shops are closed after selling for some time saying that supplies are exhausted and the people after standing for a pretty long time in a queue go away heart-broken. Sometimes civic guards and Government agents who are supposed to supervise and organise distribution appropriate to themselves and their proteges as also the agents of the black markets standing in the queue by buying all the stocks with a view to sell the same at a higher rate.

In this way bribery and corruption have become the order of the day in the Directorate of Civil Supplies and all the essential foodstuffs are becoming scarce in the markets and beyond the reach of the poor and needy and only available to richer and more influential classes of the population. This is the real picture of the condition of Bengal where a popular Ministry is still functioning and this is the real achievement of the Provincial

Autonomy which the British imperialism boasts of having conferred on Bengal. The Congress view has always been that never was real power transferred to the people and British imperialism never intended to do so.

Now, we demand of the Hon'ble Ministers to speak out what they have done so far since we last met. We know that they have been running high and low to find out a Food Minister and to use the new Minister to stabilise their own Ministry but unfortunately the food was for their own use. Now that the Food Minister has been appointed, I want to know what is his programme and how long will he take to materialise the same and these are the questions which must be answered by the Ministry and by now.

Mr. KADER BAKSH: Mr. Deputy President, Sir, I must thank my honourable friend, Mr. Lalit Chandra Das, for his enthusiasm and zeal which is like that of a new convert of the Kala Pahar in holding brief for the Government and on this vexed and most important question of foodstuffs. This is a question which has affected the millions of Bengal, nay, even the highest officials, that is, the members of the Cabinet. They may be rolling in gold, they may have the capacity to purchase foodstuffs at a very high price, but they are not at all, Sir, immune from the responsibility which they hold to the people, that is to bring the supply of food to their doors.

Sir, rice is selling at prices of twenty to twenty-five rupees a maund. It is a disgrace to the present Government. Nobody, either during the whole history of the British period or in the Moghul period or at any time after the creation of the world, has ever heard of such a high price of rice in India as it is now. We have heard of *Cheyattarer Mannantar*, but it did not last for such a long time. Sir, I had recently been to my own district of Dinajpur which is supposed to be the granary of Bengal and which used to supply and sell vast quantities of paddy and rice to the other parts of the province and beyond, but now the condition of the place is most helpless and miserable. Rice was selling there on the 15th of this month at Rs. 21 per maund, and I have seen this with my own eyes. Sir, we had been feeding 8,000 evacuees at a distance of 7 miles from the town and besides this we had been feeding thousands of employees who were working for the construction of an aerodrome, and from this district lakhs of maunds of paddy and rice were being sent to Madras. There has been a failure of crop in the district this year. I had a consultation with the Collector who gave me a figure of 9 annas in the rupee during the present year and that is an abnormal situation, though with that paddy so many months are being fed. But it is nonetheless hopeless and discouraging to the people.

Then, Sir, goat's milk is selling at Rs. 1-4 per seer; fish is selling at one rupee or one rupee and eight annas a seer, oil at Rs. 1-4 a seer instead of at 14 annas; *channa dal* at ten annas. And these prices I have paid while making my own purchases on the 14th and 15th of this month in Dinajpur. This is beyond the limit of patience of all men, and the sufferings of the people have reached a limit. But in the face of all this can Government say that they have taken any effective measures to bring some

relief to these suffering millions? They have taken none. Though they have themselves admitted that there has been a shortage in jute, paddy and rice crops this year, yet the Government have not taken any step to remedy the situation. Have they made any arrangement with the sister province of Assam to bring food to this province? No, and we do not know why. Is it not up to them as responsible representatives of the people to do something in their power to bring food or at least to do something to relieve the people? The Ministry complain that they are sandwiched what with the Governor on one side and what with the permanent officials on the other. Well, Sir, if they have been sandwiched at all, let them be practically sandwiched and not merely theoretically sandwiched. For why should they be in the Government on the one hand and object to it? Let them be practically sandwiched, Sir, as I say, and not only in theory. I appeal to them Sir, and I am not saying anything in hatred. I have placed before them some very hard facts so that they may be conscious of their duties and take steps to alleviate the distress of the people which they can if only they try a little. But they have no scheme before them to solve this great problem.

Rai Sahib JOGENDRA NATH ROY: Mr. President, Sir, I beg your leave to allow me to add a few words to the present debate on the food crisis of Bengal. The honourable members of both the Houses have given us very lucidly the most distressing picture of our country caused by this crisis. It may therefore seem to be rather unnecessary for me to add anything further to this picture. But, Sir, coming from the interior of a district where starvation, hunger and despair loom large in every one's face, where I notice daily from hour to hour large numbers of people waiting at some depots with haggard looks for an ounce of sugar or kerosene or flour, where anxious queries are forthcoming from every house regarding the availability of rice at a cheap cost. I shall indeed be failing in my duty to the people when I have the privilege and honour to represent them on the floor of this House if I do not rise to say something to give vent to my deepest feelings at this great crisis that is eating into our life-blood at every moment.

The first point to note in this connection is what are the reasons for this crisis. The Hon'ble Chief Minister in his preliminary statement has ascribed them to the following: (1) separation from Burma of those fertile plains in Bengal that have long served as a reserved rice granary for this province. (2) stream of refugees who have settled in this province, (3) the closing of the sea routes by the enemy preventing all sorts of imports to this province, (4) total disorganisation of the normal trade channels and so on. The Hon'ble the Secretary of State has ascribed these reasons to (1) loss of Burma rice, (2) increased demands for the army, (3) serious failure of millet crop in certain parts of India, (4) flooding and cyclones in Orissa and Bengal, and (5) hoarding and profiteering by some unscrupulous people. But to my mind the principal reason is the complete mishandling of the whole situation by the Government—both Provincial and Central. The restriction imposed upon free transport of food grains from province to province is certainly one of the prime causes of this distress. It is a well

known principle of economics that any restriction on the free movement of trade from place to place strikes at this root of the economic structure of the country. Living on the very outskirts of Bengal I notice that only 20 or 25 miles away from my place, *i.e.*, in places like Mihijam, Madhupur, Dhanbad, etc., in Bihar, rice is still selling at Rs. 9 or Rs. 10 per maund and *atta* at four annas or five annas per seer and so on.

Now, Sir, what does this picture show? The rice merchants of my place are telling me that if this province to province restriction is removed, the prices will at once fall down and the crisis will be much alleviated. It is a well known fact that the people of Bengal chiefly live on rice and this rice supply of the province is not quite adequate to meet the demands of the people of the province and rice is required to be imported from Burma to meet the deficiency. The influx of the "stream of refugees" from Burma and the demands of the military have aggravated this deficiency. So naturally this import of Burma rice must be substituted by import from any other province. Bihar's chief food is not rice but wheat, and she can well afford to despatch to her sister province some portion of her rice in order to alleviate her sufferings. Hence unless this province to province restriction is abolished or a better plan for equal distribution of food crops all over the country is adopted by Government the future will be darker than the present. It is the belief of the man in the street that underlying this wide restriction on the transport of food grains lies the Government's intention to store up sufficient food for services connected with or essential to the war even to the detriment of the interest of the people. Innumerable firms (*e.g.*, Hirapur Works, etc.) are hoarding up large quantities of rice, *atta* and other foodstuffs for their employees. Besides these special hoardings there are the hoardings by private people in the villages and in towns and by profiteering, dishonest merchants. Therefore my humble opinion is that the real cause of this food crisis is not so much due to shortage of food as it is due to the policy of localising and hoarding of the essential food grains carried on both by Government and ordinary people.

Then, Sir, the second point that arises as a sequel to the first is—what steps the Government is taking to cope with this serious situation? Of course I fully realise the position of the local Government that has to depend solely on the Central Government in this matter. The frequent but anxious visits of the Hon'ble Ministers to New Delhi and their series of talks with the Hon'ble Members of the Viceroy's Council in charge of Commerce, Food and Transport, show how eagerly and anxiously they are trying to meet the local critical situation. But what results we are getting. Day by day, hour by hour we are faced with greater and greater crisis, more and more starvation. The attempts of the Central Government in this connection have been thus described by the Hon'ble Secretary of State for India—"the Government of India's first measure to meet this vital problem was to centralise in the Food Department a number of administrative functions hitherto spread over various Government departments and also to arrange for purchase of wheat by Government agents from the producing areas. Similar arrangements have been made for purchase of

other grains. The results therefore have been disappointing owing to hoarding and profiteering which are difficult to deal with. The control of prices is being very earnestly considered by the Government of India and transport has naturally occupied the attention of His Majesty's Government." The Local Government has created a new department—"the Directorate of Civil Supplies" to meet this difficult situation. It now proposes to appoint a Minister solely in charge of the food problem of Bengal. If we examine the above we notice the defects inherent in them——

Mr. PRESIDENT: Mr. Roy, your time is up and you should finish your speech now.

Rai Sahib JOGENDRA NATH ROY: May I have three minutes?

Mr. PRESIDENT: Finish it as quickly as possible: there are other speakers.

Rai Sahib JOGENDRA NATH ROY: All right, Sir. These are of course noble endeavours both on the part of the Central and Provincial Governments.

In this connection I must add another matter. The Government should remember that the only key to the solution of the present food crisis lies in free distribution and increase of production. I cannot check here the temptation of quoting some lines from an article published in the *New Statesman* and *Nation of England*—which article was recently summarised in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* thus: "The *New Statesman* and *Nation of England* in an article expresses its belief that the British Government is now facing an enemy in India more formidable than the Congress, namely, 'famine' which is man-made. It says that several explanations have been made which account for a shortage but not famine. Nor does the explanation for deficit transport impress us". It believes that clue can be found in occasional leading articles of Indian newspapers that peasants are hoarding food under pressure of fear while dealers and users are hoarding for gain. The article says that although the shortage has been growing for the past six months nothing has been done until recently.

Then, Sir, in this connection I also beg your leave to allow me to make a passing remark on the cloth crisis of the country. In spite of the former Commerce Minister's assurance that standard cloth will be available by February, it has not yet seen the light of the day. And God knows when it will see it. Probably the negotiation stage is still continuing. Don't all these things point to the inefficiency of the Government in the handling of the matter?

Mr. PRESIDENT: You must finish the speech now, Mr. Roy.

Rai Sahib Jogendra Nath Roy: With these words I close my speech.

Rai Bahadur BROJENDRA MOHAN MAITRA: Mr. President, Sir, I would not like to detain the House by talking at length on a question on which everyone of my colleagues must be anxious to give his own thoughts and suggestions. Distress is patent and most acute. It is visible even through windows and doors of large buildings. No one is secure.

But as is only likely and natural, our attention is most usurped by the state of things in big cities, District towns and the industrial areas for there even if you would like to shut your eyes and ears you will not be allowed to. I will therefore draw the attention of the House to the state of things where people cannot talk out their grievances. Of course, there are occasional *hat*-loots, thefts and dacoities but those are more or less relieved by Police action. Those who have nothing to eat remain where they are. Speaking for myself, I have been approached by the agriculturists for loan of paddy for consumption and seeds. You know, Sir, this year there has been a failure of food crops in my district and also in the neighbouring districts. On the other hand, the abnormal rise of price of other necessaries of life has aggravated the situation very much. But how to meet their prayer. I have no surplus stock. I will naturally go on their behalf to the *jotedars* who have got surplus stock. But why will they give loan to the agriculturists when they expect high price by selling at a convenient time in a black market and when the Bengal Agricultural Debtors Act is operating. You know, Sir, the rural credit has dried up, consequently agriculturists cannot get loan in cash or in kind. Thus I cannot possibly force them to advance loan. I cannot do it but the Government can. They can purchase the paddy and give loans or they can force the stockists to give loan to the poor agriculturists. But you are to relax the operation of certain sections of the Bengal Agricultural Debtors Act temporarily in order to allay the fear of the creditors. If the Ministers cannot tackle the problem now, I fear, they will again be faced with difficulties.

In this connection I like to tell the House that a loud whisper is afloat in the province that the causes of the rise of price of foodstuff and its shortage are, viz., purchase for the military consumption at a reckless price and the export of rice from this province. I cannot vouchsafe the truth or otherwise of the whisper, but the Government can. If it is a fact, good administration would co-ordinate the needs of the civil population to those of the military. There must be adjustment. I know the Ministers have no control over military but they must press the extreme needs of the entire civil population before proper quarters. It is no joking with life and it is not permissible to sacrifice the barest needs of life such as food. If it would have been successful, there would not have been shortage of food.

Next, I come to the "Grow More Food" campaign. It is a total failure. The way the campaign is now conducted will not yield the desired result.

The Hon'ble Minister in charge of Agriculture knows, Sir, for many years, in this province, paddy is being destroyed on account of some kinds of diseases. The other day, the Hon'ble Minister admitted the fact, in his reply to the question of Khan Bahadur Ataur Rahman and he suggested some remedies. In order to educate the agriculturists to apply the remedies and also to use preventive measures he should employ more persons who have got knowledge in agriculture. You know, Sir, there are four private agricultural institutions besides two Government schools in this province. The private institutions established by some philanthropists with their

munificence, have not yet been favoured with sympathy from the Government, nor has any student been taken in though the curricula have been drawn up and approved and are at par with those of the secondary agricultural institutions by the Government. Every year these institutions are turning out students. They may be profitably employed under the Government and sent out in the villages for an extensive as well as for an intensive propaganda. Why do not the Ministry try to enhance the productive power of the lands now under cultivation along with the scheme of bringing more lands under cultivation? In North Bengal, the lands where paddy is grown are high and called Borind lands, and there is no irrigation system there. Big tanks which have become unserviceable and silted up, are available for re-excavation for irrigation purposes. Re-excavation schemes should be taken up at once. I appeal to the Ministers through you, Sir, not to throw away time in schemes when you have got an Act, so that this province does not depend on other provinces for food in future and it becomes self-sufficient.

Khan Bahadur Alhadj SHAIKH MUHAMMAD JAN: Mr. President, Sir, I support the amendment moved by my honourable friend, Mr. Humayun Kabir, in preference to the original resolution regarding the food situation prevailing in the country. My friend, Mr. Humayun Kabir, and other speakers have spoken so much on the subject that there is very little left for me to add to.

Now, Sir, there is a resolution and also there is an amendment, and practically there is little difference between the two. Therefore, the reason why I support the amendment in preference to the original resolution is that while the amendment offers constructive criticisms to the Government and friendly advice and remission for their past failures, the original resolution contains one or two sentences which may be construed as a censure motion against the present Ministry. Sir, I am very much afraid that the speeches made by some of my freinds are against the background of the resolution and which instead of helping the people in their distress may aggravate the situation and may result in disruption of the arrangements which have been arrived at by the present Ministry after a long preparation in the shape of appointing a Minister for Civil Supplies, and a committee of merchants to help the Food Minister which is headed by Mr. N. R. Sarkar. Threfore, I ask my friends on the other side to accept the amendment as otherwise many of us will be led to believe that my friends are actuated more by the desire to condemn this Ministry, this person or that person than by the desire to help the people to get relief from this present Ministry. Sir, it is a fallacy to say that the present Government is not functioning for the good of the people, especially when we are passing through critical times and when war is going on and the people of Bengal are also not spared. So, it is not proper at this time to appropriate blame between the Government of India and the Government of Bengal or between the permanent officials of Government and the Council of Ministers. There is no denying the fact that the economic situation is very critical at the present moment. It is worsening day by day and our

already depleted stocks are disappearing from the country and prices of commodities are soaring high, and unless the Government takes immediate drastic steps, no one can say what will happen to the people of this province in the very near future. It is true that this Government for the last six months have not been able to do much in this behalf. We know the reason for they were helpless in many respects——

Mr. PRESIDENT: Your time is up, Khan Bahadur, and you must finish now.

Khan Bahadur Alhadj SHAIKH MUHAMMAD JAN: Very well, Sir. Therefore I say that as we are passing through a critical time and exceptional times, exceptional remedies are necessary and no measures will be successful till we join together and help the Government to find out some proper means whereby the people in distress may be helped, the distress through which we are passing at the present moment.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Khan Bahadur Saiyed Muazzamuddin Hosain may now speak if he chooses to exercise his right of reply to the Debate.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Or will the Hon'ble Minister reply first and I will then make a reply?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I think that it will be better if I replied to the Debate first of all——.

Mr. PRESIDENT: In any case you will have the last word. If the mover chooses to exercise his right of reply, then you will also have a right of replying to any new points that may be raised by him.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: All right, Sir. I have listened to the Debate in this House with the greatest possible care——

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: On a point of information. In his reply will the Hon'ble Minister kindly enlighten the House as to the reason why Mr. Roxburgh has left the Civil Supply Directorate, treating this as a short-notice question?

Mr. PRESIDENT: This question does not really arise out of this matter, but if the Hon'ble Minister wishes to enlighten the House on this point then I have no objection.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Can I answer this question first of all, Sir?

Mr. PRESIDENT: If you like, you may.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Then I may say that Mr. Justice Roxburgh left the Civil Supplies Department of his own motion. The reasons are that there appears to have been a constitutional conflict between the position of one of His Majesty's Judges who was also an ex-officio Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: Something more than that. Is it not a fact that the Government does not want to give out the true facts and are concealing them?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, there is no question of concealing. I have given the true facts. (Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: And not in disgust?) Certainly not. Well, Sir, if the honourable member places more reliance on rumours I cannot help. But if so, let him not put any question on this subject. Sir, in the present circumstances bold will be the man who will accept the position of the Minister of Civil Supplies. I need not dilate upon the difficulties of the situation. The difficulties are indeed great but I maintain the view that given co-operation and goodwill the difficulties are capable of solution and adjustment. It is no good dealing with a vast problem of this complex magnitude in a spirit of defeatism. The difficulties, I maintain, are great but we need not be panicky for that reason. Many of the difficulties to which reference has been made resolve themselves into one great difficulty and that is a psychological factor, namely, the fear of the Great Unknown. This province has been faced with an unprecedented situation unknown to this province throughout the ages. We should not forget the fact that the biggest world war is being practically fought out on our soil. It is not quite accurate to state that this Government did not take any step whatever but had slept over the question. Sir, the difficulties in the way were great. I have mentioned the war, but along with the war it is well known that the export of rice from Burma ceased by March, 1942; and on the top of that came the great misfortune in the shape of the cyclone and the flood.

Cyclone and flood in Eastern Bengal succeeded by cyclone and flood in Western Bengal: also due to reasons of war there were difficulties of transport and a novel situation was created in the economic life of the province. Then, Sir, as it often happens in such abnormal situation, there are people who live and thrive on the tears and sorrows of others: they are the speculators and hoarders. It was discovered for the first time in the history of this province that so far even as rice is concerned Bengal is a province which cannot be characterised as a surplus province: then, Sir, the responsibility for the formulation of policies is a joint responsibility. In the course of the long Debate the honourable members of the Opposition did make a reference to section 126(*a*) of the Government of India Act. Apart from section 126(*a*) of the Government of India Act we have as a province to depend upon other provinces and since each of the provinces is self-sufficient for certain purposes under the Constitution Act there was a total lack of co-operation between the provinces on regional basis——

Mr. KADER BAKSH: Has any attempt been made to bring about co-operation with other provinces?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Yes, attempts were made and attempts are being made: and as a matter of fact attempts were made yesterday, and this time, I am glad to say, with success, to bring about co-operation. (Mr. KADER BAKSH: Thank you.) So the position is

that Government did have a policy: a policy which, I must say frankly, has not been a success due to factors over which Government had no control. But, Sir, there are bound to be differences of opinion in a matter of such vital importance. The main question of policy is whether it is control or whether it is decontrol: I have heard speeches in favour of the policy of the Government: I have also heard speeches made on the doctrine of control versus decontrol——

Mr. PRESIDENT: I may remind the Hon'ble Minister that there are yet three speeches to be made in the half an hour's time at our disposal, namely, your reply and the honourable mover's reply to your speech and your final reply.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, I submit that it is a very difficult matter and the Minister in charge in expounding the policy of Government also requires some time.

Mr. PRESIDENT: In that case you will have to forego the right of final reply.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I shall be very brief and I shall follow Pitt who in 1801, when a similar situation arose, said very definitely that speeches in Legislatures would not solve the problem. As I was saying, Sir, the main difficulty with which we are faced today is that sufficient attempts are not made for the purpose of mobilising public opinion.

I accept the suggestion contained in the resolution moved by my honourable friend the Leader of the Opposition that it is absolutely necessary that there should be a suitable advisory committee. In the Lower House the Hon'ble the Chief Minister announced the name of the Chairman of the committee, Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sarker, till lately the Member in charge of Food of the Government of India. This central committee will consist of—(*a*) representatives of the major political parties in the Legislature, (*b*) representatives of trade and experts whenever available. I am sure this committee will go a long way to improve the situation. The problem of food supplies is such an important problem that I think I can always rely upon the goodwill and co-operation of all sections of this House and of the country at large.

Mr. KADER BAKSH: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what kind of co-operation he wants?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I am coming to that. We propose to take in the District and Subdivisional Advisory Councils all the Collectors of Districts. The task of mobilising public opinion in this manner is a difficult task, a task which alone can solve the four-fold difficulties in the situation. (1) It can solve the problem, (2) it can help to deal with speculation, (3) it can collect information which is lamentably lacking in precision, (4) it can deal with the question of distribution of supplies in the districts and thus keeping itself generally informed with the affairs of the districts. In Calcutta we have similarly sub-areas for

the purpose of giving advice to the Regional Controllers. We shall soon introduce a rationing system in Calcutta. Preliminary steps are being taken. Circulars have been sent round two or three days ago and the whole process will be completed within a period not exceeding two months.

Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: May I know, Sir, what tangible result will actually be experienced from all these?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: So far as the imports from other provinces are concerned, those imports are coming and the "tangible result" will certainly be in evidence within a week or 10 days from date. (Khan Sahib ABUL QUASEM: It is all in theory.) Call it theory if you like but that is all we could do under the circumstances.

I may announce to the House that the Government of India has expressed its willingness to help Bengal in every possible way and food grains have actually got started coming to Calcutta for the purpose of replenishing the supplies of Calcutta.

Apart from these, I propose to call a conference of all the District Magistrates in order to find out the position in the districts. My honourable friend Mr. Nur Ahmed has referred to the condition of people at Chittagong. The position there is indeed very difficult. It is not exactly enjoying sandwich about which we have made reference but it is like jammed in between the enemy territory on the one hand and a friendly territory on the other. However, as I was saying if I get co-operation from all members of this House I think we shall be able to solve this food problem. This committee, as I told my honourable friends just now, will certainly be apprised of every single detail of policy and I do not propose to keep back anything from this committee excepting at the operational stage. My honourable friends realise the difficulty of the operational stage of a policy which has got to be executed. We might fight shy of the charge, we might also fight shy of the bear and the bull.

Sir, the charges of bribery and corruption are rampant. I propose to set up an office for the purpose of entertaining complaints, another office for the purpose of making inquiries, and a third office for the purpose of furnishing opportunity to every public-spirited citizen to offer constructive suggestions for saving his own province——.

Mr. KRISHNA CHANDRA ROY CHOWDHURY: Informers should also be employed for the purpose.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, as regards the employment of informers, just now suggested by one of my friends, I don't think it is necessary at the present moment. But, if the employment of informers is considered necessary, even that agency will have to be employed for the purpose of finding out the hoarders and speculators and for the purpose of tracing out the extent and the magnitude of the black market to which my honourable friend, Mr. Hamidul Huq Choudhury, just now made a reference. Therefore, Sir, speaking for myself, I do not

regard the motion of my honourable friend, the Leader of the Opposition, as a censure motion at all. His resolution is in these words:—

"That this Council is of opinion that the measures so far taken by the Government for ensuring supply and control of prices of food, cloth and other necessaries of life, have been wholly inadequate and ineffective and urges Government to draw up immediately and implement a comprehensive scheme for supply and control of prices of food and other necessaries of life both in urban and rural areas, if necessary, in consultation with the leaders of all parties and other prominent members of both the Houses of Legislature who take interest in such matters."

The resolution must have been moved on the 9th of March, 1943. Since then we have advanced, and my honourable friend will necessarily desire to discuss the question of control versus decontrol. As regards the question of roping off Calcutta from the rest of Bengal and the question of the solution of supply problem of Calcutta by initiating a ration scheme or otherwise, an announcement will be made within two or three days, and I propose to formulate my scheme and present it to the Council. Sir, in this task I am asking for the co-operation of all sides, and I hope this will not be made the subject-matter of party politics or political problem. The question of food supply is a vital problem of this Province. Whether the present Ministry remains in power or another Ministry comes in, this question of food supply ought to be solved.

Mr. KADER BAKSH: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Supply Department enlighten us whether purchases by Government at a high price in the districts through their agents are not hoarding?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Well, Sir, so far as I am aware, no exact or precise definition of hoarding has yet been given. An Ordinance, as I am told, is on the Statutory anvil of the Government of India and the policy of the Government of India in this respect will have to be the regional policy and within the region are included the provinces of Bengal, Assam, Orissa and I believe, the Eastern Agencies. So far as the question of futility of the purchases by Government of stocks from districts are concerned, it is a question which is linked up with the question of control versus decontrol, that is to say, if Calcutta is roped off, such purchases may not be necessary, and if, on the other hand, these purchases become necessary in order to have a stabilising effect on the markets of the province, then that is another proposition. If my honourable friends will be good enough to co-operate in this respect, I shall feel so grateful.

Mr. NUR AHMED: On a point of information, Sir. The Hon'ble Minister in his reply has admitted the difficult position of Chittagong but may I enquire what measures have been taken by Government for giving the people any relief? He has not mentioned anything about this and hence my question.

Mr. PRESIDENT: If honourable members ask questions in this way, then I am afraid the mover of the motion will not have much time for replying to the Debate. Members must bear that fact in mind.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOWDHURY: The Hon'ble Minister has announced the composition of a committee to help in the formulation of a scheme. May I know if this matter will be placed before the House for consideration and discussion?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Most certainly, otherwise, there is no point in it.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: May I enquire whether the Hon'ble Minister is going to accept the Motion for the way in which he concluded his remarks showed that he was ready to accept it? In that case I shall be very brief in my reply.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: If the honourable member will please leave out the words which are rather expressive of censure on the Government then my position become easier, and easier it becomes for the solution of the problem. I hope the Leader of the Opposition will understand my view-point.

Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: It will not be possible for me at this stage to withdraw those words, for they are the kernel of my motion. I would far rather accept the amendment of my friend Mr. Kabir.

Mr. President, I shall be short in my reply. We know that the difficulty is vast because the subject is vast, namely, the food supply problem and the problem of price control. We also know that the visitation of Nature and the act of God over which no human being has any control, has rendered the matter more complex. But, Sir, all that we are concerned to know and to be satisfied upon is whether Government have done all that that is required under the present admittedly very difficult position. We have heard the statement of the Hon'ble Minister who is now in charge of the Department of Civil Supplies; we have also heard the Nawab Bahadur of Dacca who read out a long statement before this House before we started this discussion and we have since then also had the advantage of hearing the different members of the different parties in this House on this question and every one of these honourable members excepting some supporters of Government has complained that the measures which were taken by Government were not merely wholly inadequate and ineffective but have flung wide open the gates of corruption and bribery and have rather aggravated the situation still further, and created a class of profiteers and hoarders and black markets. If influential men were consulted, men who could give the Government proper and sound advice, then a solution might be found. But Government merely followed a policy of drift. The measures were taken without much thought and without consulting people who could give sound advice. Government in fact, as I have already said, followed the policy of dritt, and played with the problem and tried to show that they were doing something, though as a matter of fact, there was no earnest or honest attempt at grappling with the problem on their part. The problem of food is a difficult problem. But even then Government had made no sincere and earnest attempt to deal with it.

Even now it seems the Government has no policy and no idea of framing any policy. How can the Government frame any policy without collecting statistics of actual stock and requirements? If Government still grope in the dark then how can they formulate their policy? They have referred to certain statistics but according to their own statement they are not reliable From time to time they have given statistics of the deficit of rice. According to one Minister the shortage is 23 per cent. while according to the other it is only 3 per cent.

But, Sir, should I quote figures from the report of the Land Revenue Commission which will show that the shortage is in the region of 45 per cent.? These figures have been collected after long enquiries in the mufassil areas by a large number of reliable officers and they found out after careful enquiry that the deficit is in the region of 45 per cent. These figures show that our requirement is 123 lakhs tons as against our estimated production of 69 lakhs tons. How does the Ministry propose to meet this huge deficit? We do not find any reason why they are allowing the prices of paddy to shoot up to 400 per cent. of the normal price? Cannot they even now prosecute and meet out exemplary punishment for prices above 200 per cent. of normal price, *i.e.*, above Rs. 12 in Calcutta and above Rs. 10 in the rural areas. We are told that that will stop supply and result in disaster; but cannot stock be taken of all existing supply and sources of supply and all large stocks commandeered? Government has got a huge staff and all the statistics can be collected in 15 days, but will the Government care to do it? If it does not, the country will be right in holding that Government has got dishonest motive and is in collusion with the profiteers and hoarders. They are disclosing blissful ignorance of the crisis in the rural areas so much so that even at this abnormal time they think that when the people are starving they can collect loans distributed to poor agriculturists last year. They do not know the crop seasons even and do not think it is necessary to wait for reaping of the crops for repayment of loan. What can be expected from such a Government? What has the Ministry done to solve this food problem? They have done nothing. What we want is that they should show real earnestness for grappling with the problem: they should not waste time in calling for reports and examining reports and so on. They must arrange to distribute standard cloth to all the poor people who comprise at least 60 per cent. of the population and cannot rest content with supplying only 250 pieces per union as is being arranged: they must supply 500 pieces absolutely free to the indigent of every union. We know that the mills are at present very hard-worked: but they must arrange to work spinning wheels and semi-automatic spinning wheels in order to solve the cloth problem. If after collecting statistics it is found that we are short of rice by 25 per cent., ration cards should be issued for the whole of Bengal at three-fourths of the ordinary requirement. By that we expect to save all the people: otherwise one-fourth of the people of the province will be wiped out. With these words I commend my motion which has been supported by almost all the speakers except a few supporters of the Governmnt, to the acceptance of the House.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, I do not fully realise the significance of the concluding portion of the speech of the Leader of the Opposition that the Revenue Minister of the province is really ignorant about the revenue problem of the province. The position which is visualised by my honourable friend is a position which is based absolutely upon the acceptance of the rigid doctrine of the enforcement of the *status quo*. My honourable friend has asked if the Government did anything for the purpose of combating the food problem, for the purpose of supplying foodstuffs and for the purpose of normalising the food situation. But my honourable friend knows it very well that Government have adopted a definite policy and only the other day an announcement was made that they will proceed on the line of that policy within a very short time.

So far as the question of statistics is concerned, my honourable friend is relying upon the statistics given in the Report of the Land Revenue Commission and he very strongly urges the House to accept the figure. I entirely agree with him and think that this should have been made by him earlier than this.

Last of all, to deal with the question of cloth supply. This question is bound to engage my attention. It is a difficult problem and my honourable friends know that linked up with this problem there are many other problems. We have to deal with small irrigational projects. Then there is another question, the question of reclaiming the waste lands for the purpose of increasing the area of cultivation and possibly in this regard we have to take action under 175A of the Defence of India Rules. These are important questions to be dealt with. So, I shall certainly make requests to my honourable friends not to bring in political division over this issue.

Mr. HUMAYUN KABIR: On a point of information, Sir. May I through you ask the Hon'ble Minister when this committee is going to be appointed and also what powers will be given to this committee? Will it be a committee which will merely be called to condone actions which have been already done or will it be consulted before any decision is taken?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I have already answered that question when the honourable member was not in the House.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, order. The question before the House is the motion of Khan Bahadur Saiyed Muazzamuddin Hosain: That this Council is of opinion that the measures so far taken by the Government for ensuring supply and control of prices of food, cloth and other necessaries of life, have been wholly inadequate and ineffective and urges Government to draw up immediately and implement a comprehensive scheme for supply and control of prices of food and other necessaries of life both in urban and rural areas, if necessary, in consultation with the leaders of all parties and other prominent members of both the Houses of Legislature who take interest in such matters.

Since then an amendment has been moved by Mr. Humayun Kabir which runs as follows:—

That for the words "ensuring supply and control of prices of food, cloth and other necessaries of life have been wholly inadequate and ineffective and urges Government to draw up immediately and implement a comprehensive scheme for supply and control of prices of food and other necessaries of life both in urban and rural areas, if necessary", the following words be substituted:—

"ensuring supply of food, clothing and other necessaries of life at controlled prices requires revision in the light of experience so far gained and urges upon the Government to declare Bengal a deficit province immediately and take such steps as may be necessary for ensuring the supply of a minimum quota of food and other necessaries to all persons in rural as well as urban areas."

The amendment was put and a division taken with the following result:—

AYES—16.

Mr. Dhirendra Lal Barua.
Mr. Moazzemali Chowdhury.
Mr. Khorshed Alam Chowdhury.
Mr. B. J. Cohen.
Mr. Lalit Chandra Das.
Mr. Bankim Chandra Datta.
Mrs. K. D'Rozario.
Khan Bahadur Alhadj Shaikh Muhammad Jan.
Mr. Humayun Kabir.
Rai Bahadur Brojendra Mohan Maitra.
Khan Bahadur Ataur Rahman.
Rai Sahib Jogendra Nath Ray.
Mr. Nagendra Nath Ray.
Mr. Amulyadhone Ray.
Rai Bahadur Radhica Bhushan Roy.
Mr. Krishna Chandra Roy Choudhury.

NOES—15.

Khan Sahib Fariduddin Ahmad.
Mr. Mesbahuddin Ahmed.
Mr. Nur Ahmed.
Khan Sahib Abdul Aziz.
Mr. Kader Baksh.
Mr. Hamidul Huq Choudhury.
Mr. R. W. N Ferguson.
Khan Baahdur Saiyed Muazzamuddin Hosain.
Mr. Latafat Hossain.
Mr. W. B. G. Laidlaw.
Begum Hamida Momin.
Mr. T. B. Nimmo.
Khan Sahib Abul Quasem.
Khan Bahadur Mukhlesur Rahman.
Dr. Kasiruddin Talukdar.

Mr. HAMIDUL HUQ CHOUDHURY: Sir, before you announce the result of the division, may I know if one of the honourable members went into the lobby after the order was given to close the doors?

Mr. PRESIDENT: Yes, but I noticed that he actually went into the lobby before the doors were closed.

Ayes being 16 and the Noes 15, the amendment was carried.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The House stands adjourned till 2-15 p.m. on the 2nd April.

Adjournment.

The Council then adjourned till 2-15 p.m. on Friday, the 2nd April, 1943.

Members absent.

The following members were absent from the meeting held on the 23rd March, 1943:—

(1) Khan Bahadur Naziruddin Ahmad.
(2) Mr. Altaf Ali.
(3) Rai Bahadur Keshab Chandra Banerjee.
(4) Mr. Hamidul Huq Chowdhury.
(5) Khan Bahadur Rezzaqul Haider Chowdhury.
(6) Mr. Narendra Chandra Datta.
(7) Mr. Kamini Kumar Dutta.
(8) Alhadj Khan Bahadur Khwaja Muhammad Esmail.
(9) Mr. Kanai Lal Goswami.
(10) Mr. Mohamed Hossain.
(11) Khan Bahadur Muhammad Asaf Khan.
(12) Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan.
(13) Mr. J. McFarlane.
(14) Mr. Naresh Nath Mookerjee.
(15) Dr. Kumud Sankar Ray.
(16) Mr. J. B. Ross.
(17) Mr. Sachindra Narayan Sanyal.
(18) Rai Sahib Jatindra Mohan Sen.

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